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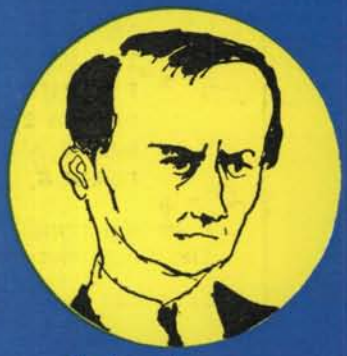

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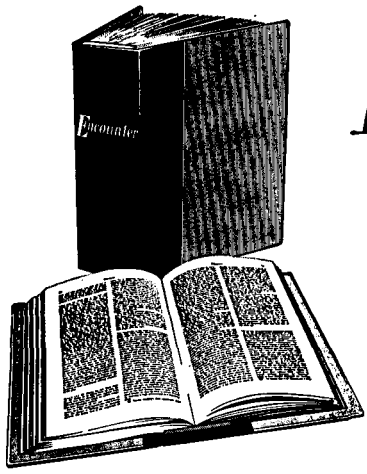

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Harry G. Johnson

A Word to the Third World

A Western Economist's Frank Advice

MY THEME is: "Controls *versus* Competition in Economic Development." This, I believe, is the most fundamental issue there is for Afro-Asian or Third World countries that regard themselves as underdeveloped and wish to pursue policies of promoting their economic development and raising the standards of living of their peoples. The question is whether the objective of economic growth is better and more efficiently pursued by means of a strong and centralised government development policy, watching over and policing the decisions of private individuals and enterprises, controlling prices, imports, investment decisions, and so forth—or whether the objective is better pursued by reducing government intervention as close as possible to the minimum of maintaining law and order, providing defence, education, and other collective services that the public wants but cannot readily provide on a purely private basis, and allowing the maximum possible scope for private choice and private initiative within this common framework.

The position I shall argue for, in brief, is that the second answer—*competition*—is far more promising than the first answer—*controls*. But I shall not argue for it on the basis of dogma, or of first principles of economic philosophy. I shall argue for it instead on grounds of empirical observations of twenty-five years of effort to promote economic development in various parts of the world. Experience of these efforts, in my view at least, strongly suggests that the approach to the promotion of economic development through controls, central planning, and the like, has been both a failure in terms of results achieved and a shocking waste both of the time of the world's very scarce supply of educated manpower and of the political energies of the peoples of the developing countries.

Whatever the theoretical appeal of deliberate economic planning, we have *in practice* lacked the capacity to execute it properly. In consequence, we have squandered human and natural resources—and especially human resources—in nobly conceived efforts that have, nevertheless, failed to move us ahead as planned. Much worse, we have developed ways of thinking and of doing things that perpetuate the initial faith in the control approach, and its methods, without in fact being capable of delivering the promised goods. As a result, we seem to be stuck with a bankrupt mythology of development policy, a set of motions we feel obliged to go through even though we know they are of purely ritual significance. We know we are lost, but we are unwilling to admit it and to attempt to rediscover our whereabouts by retracing our steps. It is for that reason that I want to pose starkly the issue between controls and competition, and to argue the case for competition and against controls.

HARRY G. JOHNSON *is Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago and the London School of Economics. He writes regularly for* ENCOUNTER, *and his recent article—"Economic Revolutions from Lord Keynes to Milton Friedman" (April 1971)—attracted widespread attention. His present article is based on a lecture given at the University of Ghana in Accra.*

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, when I started my professional career as an economist, both the issue and the answer appeared very different. Let me begin by recalling some of the salient features of the intellectual climate of that time—which was the time of the ending of the Second World

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War, and the high tide of meditation on the world's experience since the ending of the First World war.

The prevailing ideology of economics—if I may call it that—was at that time a compound of three elements derived from recent economic history.

1. The first and most important was the belief, derived in Britain from the whole of inter-war experience and in other countries from the great depression of the 1930s, that capitalism was a proven failure. Intellectually, in economic theory, this belief had two major sources. One was the work done in the late 1920s and early 1930s on the theory of "monopolistic" or "imperfect" competition, which at least in the majority tradition stressed the wastes of competition in the form of product differentiation, advertising, and excess capacity. The other was the "Keynesian Revolution", the central message of which was that capitalism left to itself tends to produce mass unemployment and economic stagnation.

We now know, with a quarter of a century of sustained high employment and economic growth in the advanced countries behind us, and with a far better understanding of the international monetary system than was then available, that the British problem of the inter-war period was a *special* problem compounded of industrial senility and an overvalued exchange rate, while the Great Crash was a matter of national and international monetary mismanagement by central bankers who failed to understand the system within which they exercised their power. We also know now, as a result of the development of new theories based on such considerations as the value of people's time and the problem of getting used to rising living standards, that the phenomena of imperfect or monopolistic competition are not simple manifestations of the presumed irrationality of the system. They represent, rather, complex processes of social adaptation to economic growth and economic change. But at that time, economic science seemed to support this grand double-thesis: that capitalism as a system was "a failure;" and that any intelligent person with a good B.A. in economics—at least a B.A. from Cambridge or Harvard—could vastly improve on its performance if he could only retain his high-minded disdain for "the whole rotten system."

This last idea—that a conventionally well-educated person can easily improve on the performance of capitalism *on any and every occasion*—has proved to be the most fallacious intellectual legacy that the inter-war period has bequeathed to us. Unfortunately, it is an idea that generates and supports very powerful vested interests in the political and governmental process. After all, it buttresses both the prestige of the university-educated and the presumption that the civil service—which is selected by educational attainment—is a priestly calling without whose saintly presence man would lose his immortal soul and become a mere materialist, pagan swine.

2. The second element of our intellectual heritage from the inter-war period, and one that was a necessary intellectual complement of the first, was the belief in Economic Planning. It derived largely from what was assumed to be the lesson of Soviet experience, but also owed a great deal to what was assumed to be the source of strength of Nazi Germany. In fact, both Russian and German economic planning and management in that period have turned out on subsequent examination to have been rather make-shift procedures, highly conditioned on the historically authoritarian nature of the societies involved. But at the time, the Left turned gladly to Russia, and the Right—until 1938, Munich and all that—to Germany for a vision of the well-ordered society to set against the social and political stresses and strains that were besetting the Capitalism which they knew, and which appeared to have failed woefully as a system of economic organisation.

3. The third element of our intellectual heritage from the inter-war period is more difficult to pin down. I think of it as essentially a German idea, born of Germany's backwardness in relation to England and France in the nineteenth century and then adopted by Germany's central European rivals after her defeat in the first World War—the idea that national strength and power depend on Industrialisation and especially on industrial Self-sufficiency. This idea somehow became transplanted into the mainstream of Anglo-Saxon economic thought, I suspect largely through the flight of well-trained Central European scholars to the West during the 1930s.

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THESE THREE IDEAS—the incompetence of Capitalism, the efficacy of Central Planning and Controls, and the crucial importance of Industrialisation and industrial Self-sufficiency—were both the keystones of economic ideology in Western economics in 1945, and thereabouts, and the substance of the economic ideology on which the developing nations drew as they became independent and started to plan their own economic development in the post-war period. The ideology had great attractions for them, and for many reasons. In particular, it promised the opportunity to leap ahead of both Capitalism (by planning) and Communism (by humane and socially-oriented policies) while at the same time giving an important role both to the exercise of charismatic leadership and to the possession of the educational qualifications necessary for entry and advancement in the civil service.

The British Tradition

THESE ATTRACTIONS have been particularly great, in my judgment, in the erstwhile British colonies in West Africa (Ghana, Nigeria, etc.). For they have fitted in very neatly with the social structure the British created and left behind them.

The British Empire was always stretched very thin. It depended on a small sprinkling of highly trained civil servants to run it—civil servants trained in the United Kingdom and schooled to conceive local problems in British terms. Long before the dissolution of the Empire it had begun to train a few selected natives of the colonial territories to take over from their British counterparts—a trend which owed something to the serious loss of the flower of British youth in the First World War as well as to the sense of responsibility to the subject peoples of the Empire. It is important to observe that, in addition to the general economic ideas I have described, the trained élite of natives were bound in the nature of things to acquire certain ideas peculiar to the British tradition and not necessarily well adapted to the circumstances in which they would find themselves upon the gaining of independence. Two sets of ideas are, I believe, of particular importance in this connection.

The first set of ideas concerns the role of the university-trained man in society, and particularly the notion that the College Graduate is specially gifted to guide the destiny of his ignorant fellow-citizens. This idea, a product of the system of British colonial administration, has been reinforced by the relativities of salaries and perquisites necessary to run a Colonial System. These salary structures, besides reinforcing the belief of the successful-college-graduate-turned-administrator in his own inherent superiority, have led to a strong tendency to overemphasise the importance of educational opportunity and educational investment as a means to economic growth—and to the neglect of emphasis on entrepreneurial skills and their development. A temporary safety-valve has been provided by the transitory opportunity to replace expatriate civil servants, teachers, etcetera, by educated natives. But there is a serious danger, particularly in Africa (though also in India and Pakistan) of overproduction of B.A.s for whom there will be no place either in the civil service or in private industry, people whose frustrated aspirations may lead them to be a source of persistent political trouble—as has happened in other countries. The Intellectual credits himself with a natural right to lead the less educated. In fact he assumes a right to economic privilege which he may be incapable of earning by his productive performance. But in that case he will favour political and social changes that will give him the economic power he craves.

THE SECOND SET OF IDEAS concerns the problems of the Economy and what should be done about them. Here the special nature of the British experience in the inter-war period is of great importance. Britain entered that period with an antiquated industrial structure and an overvalued exchange rate. The natural and obvious answer to the problem—then as now, because the problem remains for British politicians and civil servants today—was found in governmental interventions to improve industrial efficiency. In the 1920s it was expressed in the vague concept of "rationalisation of industry." Britain felt she had to hold on to what she had, and that required public support (financial or otherwise) for efforts to restore the profitability of existing industry and to increase productivity. This involved (on the

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one hand) the encouragement of monopolies, cartels, and other restrictive practices designed to enable industry to obtain a fair profit, and (on the other hand) governmental initiative in the establishment of new industries deemed to be socially though not privately profitable. Much of this mentality has been inherited by the governments of ex-colonial countries, via their English-educated politicians and civil servants—with completely inadequate recognition that these policies are policies of desperate defence of a senile industrial power, not policies of building industrial strength on the foundations of a potentially lively, energetic, and inventive population. There is a very long lag in the acquisition of new ideas. Precisely for that reason, the acquisition of apparently new ideas from a senescent source is a highly dangerous procedure.

THESE, THEN, WERE THE BASIC IDEAS with which the world embarked on the course of promoting the economic development of its backward and newly independent regions—the blatant inadequacy of Capitalism, the miraculous promise of Economic Planning, and the strategic importance of Industrialisation—together, in ex-British-colonial countries, with sublime confidence in the superior capacity of the Educated Elite for taking decisions and controlling the actions of the uneducated and illiterate. How have these ideas fared since?

Bad Decision-Making

THE ANSWER, on the basis of experience, has to be: *very badly indeed.* Just how badly is difficult to convey, for two reasons.

The first is the very human propensity not to question the value of ideas, but instead to question the good faith, competence, or determination of the particular individuals in charge of implementing the ideas. Hence the ideas survive, and their persistent inadequacy is explained away by the shortcomings of particular individuals—a most unscientific procedure.

The second reason, which has impressed itself on me as a result of a great deal of travel about the world, is the carefully cultivated ignorance of people in every country about the experience of people in other countries, and the belief—extremely useful to politicians—that somehow One's Own Country is a unique specimen to which the ordinary laws of economics do not apply. People who do not know history are condemned to repeat it; and people who do not understand economics are condemned to suffer from the harsh operation of economic laws. Unfortunately in neither case do they necessarily learn anything from the experience other than a new and more clever and sophisticated set of explanations of why "it couldn't be helped."

As an example, I refer to the infant industry argument for *tariff protection,* which has been admitted by international trade theorists as a valid but extremely restricted possible exception to the case for free trade since the days of John Stuart Mill. It has been my somewhat sardonic pleasure to witness this argument being newly re-discovered, with all the intellectual thrill of Archimedes in his bath-tub, at least twice. Once was by a very clever young man in Singapore, who thought that a market of one-and-a-half million poor Chinese was completely adequate for the development of a modern chemical industry; and again (only last summer) by a highly socially-motivated economics professor in New Guinea, who thought that a modest amount of protection would be sufficient to convert that very primitive society (and I mean primitive in Afro-Asian terms, not English terms) into an industrial rival of the United States.

Despite the belief in every country that it is economically unique, and that all it needs to achieve an economic orgasm is sufficient tender loving care from its civil servants and sufficient dynamic mastery by its politicians, there is a common pattern to be found in the experience of a large number of contemporary developing countries. It is a common pattern which embraces both politics and economics. And it is a pattern which, to the economist, spells out a decision to pursue repeated defeat—precisely because it involves an attempt to deny, and even to repeal, the laws of economics. Specifically, it involves a belief that the decisions of politicians and civil servants can and should be substituted for the decisions of business men and women—and more important, that political decisions are better, bolder, nobler, more worthy of commendation, the more they fly in the face of common sense.

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Further, it involves the belief that the judgment of civil servants, on all kinds of economic issues, must be superior to the judgment of the market.

THE RESULTS OF THESE BELIEFS are, to the economist, only too predictable—though the economist is far more likely than the average man to understand their social and economic costs, because he is trained to be aware of costs and to be aware also of the economic value of time. This indeed could be said to be the essential spirit of contemporary economic science—on the one hand, a constant questioning of the relationship between the benefits and the costs to be expected from economic decisions; on the other hand, consciousness of the rate of interest (in real and not in monetary terms) as the factor that links the present to the future and must be considered in all decisions about investment for the future welfare of the population.

From the economic point of view, political decisions about economic matters are virtually certain to be bad decisions. This is so for several reasons. The most important are, first, that the political process works by a variety of imitative magic. We are a nation, which I and my political colleagues control. Any self-respecting nation should have such-and-such an industry. Therefore, I will provide the such-and-such for my nation, regardless of cost or usefulness. As a result of this mentality, the world is well provided with industrial monuments to its politicians. These monuments—like other monuments—are impressive simultaneously for the grandeur of their conceptions and the complete uselessness of their presence.

Secondly, the politician is only in a vague and indirect sense responsible to his nation. Primarily he is responsible to his immediate electorate, and that electorate has its own interests, which are usually more concerned with snatching benefits in the way of new local investments at the expense of the electorates of other politicians than with the question whether the investments are worth undertaking in the first place. In all the countries I know, the question of whether a new Factory, Hospital, University, or whatever is worth building is far less important politically than the question of *which politician's constituency it is to be built in.*

Thirdly, the political process is almost completely insensitive to the value of time. The motto is "*I want it now*"; and having got it *now* and having no use for it *now*, I can always comfort myself with the thought that *someday* it may turn out to be useful. I detect strong evidence of that sort of attitude in, say, Ghana of the Nkrumah period. There was a tremendous waste of resources in grandiose investment and construction projects. But the people now alive and powerful forget the costs—which they did not bear—and tend to be excessively grateful for the legacy of potentially useful apparatus they have inherited—and extremely anxious to preserve it, whether it is useful or not.

IN THE SAME SORT OF WAY, the entrusting of control over a wide range of economic affairs to the civil service is likely to produce bad results.

First there is the question of *corruption.* Those of us who have been trained, like myself, at a good English university find it almost impossible to conceive of the likelihood of corruption in the civil service. The law is the law, and one is there at great public expense to administer it fairly and impartially. But if one looks at the process of governmental regulation from the point of view of either American history or economic logic—both of which encourage a pessimistic approach to human affairs—one is bound to notice that the civil service's rights to fix prices, allot foreign exchange, approve or disapprove of investment projects (and so forth) have a substantial economic value. Even in the most affluent of countries the civil servant can always use a little more money, or even better, the odd gift or present that is not big enough to corrupt him but also not small enough to leave him uninterested. One is, therefore, led to the conclusion that extensive government intervention in economic affairs, whatever its ideological justification in terms of service to the public good, establishes the civil service as a parasite on private enterprise, entitled to levy taxes on private enterprise in return purely for the privilege of business men and women being allowed to try to make a profit. Enterprises in less developed countries have plenty of problems without adding this one. To have to pay

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an arbitrary and additional set of taxes—*corruption taxes*—in order to be allowed to exist and survive is an extra burden on the process of development.

Corruption in government is, however, a relatively cheap price to pay for economic liberty—assuming, that is, that corruption is widespread and common enough to constitute a general tax at known rates of tax, and not an exercise in piracy and extortion. Several countries I know—including, historically, the United States and Canada, and also contemporary Thailand and Taiwan—have managed to achieve relatively high rates of growth in spite of having to carry a heavy burden of bribable Administration drones. The real problem posed by extensive government intervention in economic affairs is not corruption, but honesty and integrity. A man charged with administering hopelessly stupid economic legislation, who is willing to forget those laws for a personal financial consideration, simply imposes a tax on economic progress. His claims on the benefits that progress brings are socially regrettable and economically functionless, but nevertheless *tolerable* as the price of lip-service to the political process.

A man, on the other hand, charged with administering hopelessly stupid economic legislation, who is nevertheless convinced that the legislation must be right (because it has been legislated) and that his job is to enforce it (whatever happens) can be an incalculably powerful obstacle to economic growth—the more so the more honest he is. He is an obstacle in two senses. First, such a man has to be both well-educated and well-paid—hence he represents a substantial social investment, which could alternatively be used for more desirable social purposes than simply stopping other people from doing things. Second, not only does he prevent other people from doing things, but he wastes a lot of their time and money in the effort to discover whether he is really such a slave of stupidity as he appears to be, or whether he is amenable to either reason or corruption—corruption being in this context a way of accelerating the processes of reason.

The straight cost of the manpower involved in the control of private economic decisions in a developing economy is probably the most important argument for relying on Competition rather than using Control methods in the management of such an economy. Further, as economists are well aware, the indirect costs imposed by a control system on those who have to live with it may be far more substantial than the direct costs of the administrative manpower required to operate it. On the other hand, one might argue—in line with what I have said earlier about the legacy of British colonialism—that the purpose of a nation is not to promote economic development in any meaningful sense, but to enable its educated élite to survive and prosper on good salaries and with confidence in their own superiority over people who merely work for a living. In that case, and in that case alone, the emphasis in development policy on political decision and civil service administration of economic matters makes sense. But then let us give up the pretence that economic policy is concerned with economic development, and instead recognise that what is called "development" is really *an effort to consolidate and extend the power of the existing élite over the rest of society.*

Profit & Loss

EARLIER I SPOKE of a common pattern that has emerged from the experience of the less developed countries. Let me conclude by describing some of the characteristics of that pattern.

There are, I think, four major characteristics of underdeveloped countries and underdeveloped policy, each of which helps to guarantee the continuance of the state of underdevelopment, despite appearances to the contrary.

1. The first is the reliance on increased taxation of traditional activities, usually based on primary agricultural production for export, as a source of finance for economic development expenditure. The assumption is that such activities can be taxed without any significant economic effect on the rate of production. The people involved are assumed to be simply stupid cows ripe for milking by their sophisticated city masters. But they are not stupid. They respond, sooner or later, to taxation by producing less, either in relative or in absolute terms. The result is a loss of export revenue, and a balance-of-payments problem—which is

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invariably not recognised as a consequence of bad policies, but instead regarded as an unforeseen national disaster to be remedied by more diligent application of accepted policies.

2. The second characteristic of underdeveloped country development policies is a programme of import substitution. One might be inclined, on the basis of well-tested economic theory, to think that one imports from abroad because the foreigner can produce the goods cheaper and better than one can do oneself, and that one has a comparative advantage in what one already is able to export and should concentrate one's development efforts there. But, of course, that is obsolete and undynamic thinking, according to the philosophy of development I have described earlier. Proper development policy means following some "Maginot Line" strategem—finding out where the enemy is strongest and most impregnable, and then attempting to outnumber and overwhelm him at that point. The result, in practice, is that all one does is to create a local monopoly in doing inefficiently what the foreigner could do efficiently, and assign that monopoly either to a native political favourite who is deemed to deserve an unmerited source of income at the expense of his fellow citizens, or to a foreign company that is prepared to pay appropriate tribute to the local politicians.

3. The third characteristic, which is an inevitable consequence of the first two, is that the country has a chronic balance-of-payments programme. If you tax exports heavily on the one hand, and on the other hand, persistently try to insert incompetent local citizens into businesses they can only manage profitably with the help of large investments of foreign capital, large purchases of foreign machinery, and abundant supplies of foreign intermediate goods and replacements, you will inevitably have a chronic balance-of-payments problem. Unfortunately, the chronic balance-of-payments problem will suggest, plausibly enough, not that your policy is wrong to begin with, but that you have not pushed it far enough. Still more taxation of traditional exports, and still more import substitution, will seem both necessary and economically virtuous.

4. The fourth characteristic (and again an inevitable one, given the general character of the development policies I have described) will be a mounting concern about social justice, evidenced in efforts to fix the prices of particular goods and services, and the wages of particular kinds of labour, at what is considered by politicians and civil servants to be "a fair level." This is virtually certain to be an expensive exercise in futility. There may well exist, and probably does exist, a fair distribution of purchasing power among individuals in terms of some social consensus. But there is no such thing as a socially fair rent for housing, independent of who lives in the house and who built it and rents it out. Or a socially fair price for cocoa, independent of how much land the producer owns and how much he has invested in improving it. Or a socially fair wage for industrial labour, independent of rural incomes and the amount of urban unemployment.

Efforts to achieve "fairness" of income distribution by government intervention in fixing the prices of particular goods, services, and classes of labour are, moreover, peripheral and indeed irrelevant to the main issue of the distribution of real incomes and purchasing power among groups in the population resulting from the development process. This issue, as the Pearson Report[1] has noted, has been a subject of increasing concern throughout the developing world. Its emergence as an issue has been a predictable consequence of the nature of development policy as I have described it. Development policy has taxed the masses heavily, and particularly it has taxed the rural sector (and the poor and uneducated in general). It has transferred the proceeds of this taxation to the educated, and to those politically powerful enough to obtain a well-paid sinecure in doing inefficiently what foreigners used to do efficiently (either through imports, or through the management of local enterprises). Those who have had a political claim on the development process—the educated, the "middle class," the established native capitalists, and the minority of labour employed in industrial establishments, not to speak of the politicians themselves—have done very well out of

[1] *Partners in Development: Report of the Commission on International Development*, Lester B. Pearson, Chairman (New York: Praeger; London: Pall Mall Press, 1969).

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development policy as it has been executed in practice, regardless of its efficiency or otherwise at the level of economic aggregates and averages. The rest of the population has not done well. For it, the visible economic development that has enabled the minority to regard itself as "modernised" and able to deal with other national élites on equal terms has been achieved by a process of forced income transfer, not of shared economic progress. Dim awareness of this, and more direct awareness of the existence of income inequalities stemming from political power and property ownership rather than from evident differences in productive contribution, create a latent threat of revolution against the appropriation of the benefits of development policy as currently implemented by the local élite of politicians, educated people, and established capitalists. This threat, however, may be easily manageable, precisely because the élite controls both the resources of the economy and the apparatus of the state.

An Alternative Approach

THESE FOUR CHARACTERISTICS—export taxation, inefficient import substitution, chronic balance-of-payments problems, and a concern about irrelevant rather than relevant aspects of social justice—are consequences in their various ways of the "controls" approach to development promotion, the philosophical origins of which I sketched briefly at the outset.

The alternative approach to development planning and promotion would involve a deliberate—and extremely altruistic and self-sacrificing—decision by the politicians and the civil service to withdraw from detailed intervention in the economy, and to replace controls by reliance on the market mechanisms of competition for economic decision-taking. This would *not*—contrary to the easy line of dismissal of genuinely radical ideas in terms of *ideological repugnance* (to which élites are naturally inclined to turn)—mean a simple return to the unbridled Capitalism of the late nineteenth century. (One could probably make a good case to the effect that, taking proper account of starting points, unbridled Capitalism in that period did a better job of promoting genuine economic development in the underdeveloped world than contemporary policies of government intervention have been doing.) Instead, it would mean concentrating the attention of the political and administrative machinery of government on the kinds of policy-making that historical and contemporary experience have shown to be vital to economic success. These involve achieving the proper balance of government expenditure and taxation, the proper structure of taxation, and the appropriate monetary and exchange rate policies required for decision-making through competition in the market *to serve the social good*—rather than wasting resources or creating private profit at public expense.

I suggest a new Third World economic policy, a new theory and practice, to take the place of the dissipation of effort and talent now entailed in the pursuit of vaguely defined social purposes through pervasive interventions in the detailed operations of the private economy. The problems involved are intellectually and politically challenging enough to warrant concentration on them.

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A. N. Fragola

Ceci-Nuts

THE MAN AND HIS WIFE always appeared together selling their roasted ceci-nuts at every church festival, which, in my neighbourhood, came as invariably as the summer months. I can still see the old man swirling the nuts in the sand-filled cauldron with his wooden oar. Later his wife scooped up the nuts with a sieve and piled them on a table in front of her. Then she put them in bags of three sizes: ten, fifteen, and twenty-five cents.

Every parish gave a festa or bazaar in honour of its own patron saint. There were the Feasts of St. John the Baptist, St. Anthony, and St. Peter, but the feast that I waited for with growing anticipation was the Feast of Our Lady. The church was only a block away, so I could go each of the four nights. It began on Thursday and ended on Sunday. Each year I watched the men close off the streets with wooden horses and set up booths of chuck-a-luck, dice, black jack, and assorted wheels of fortune. A ferris wheel and merry-go-round were always brought in. Some of the remaining booths were used for games of skill, and others for selling food.

Each year I went to the Feast with Gram. She knew everyone, and seemed to know everything about them. Gram didn't go more than one or two nights, usually on Friday or Saturday. When I tagged along with her, I felt more a part of the feast than when I was alone. Gram was sarcastic, but her gruff comments were tinged with humour, and her brown eyes, set deep between wide forehead and high cheekbones, were alert with mischief. She dressed for the feast by putting on a black or brown dress decorated with floral designs, a belt, dark stockings and pump shoes. Gram was proud of her dark brown hair which, though streaked with grey, was still long and glossy. Before leaving the house, Gram combed her hair in the kitchen, a routine I rarely witnessed. She placed the newspaper on the floor and set a chair in the middle; then with body bent at the waist, face hidden by hair trailing the paper, she ran the comb through, and the air crackled with electricity, and I with expectancy. After forming a parting, she pinned the rest into a bun with a small comb. Later, as she went to each booth to visit her friends, I listened to the Sicilian dialect, thrilled that Gram was again showing me her domain. Watching them, I felt that I belonged to a unique world—separated not only from the rest of Syracuse, but from New York State and the country as well.

"See Donna Marcantano, *là*," Gram said, pointing to a mammoth woman. "*Ha due figli*, two boys," and she held up two fingers. "*Uno* a lawyer, *altro maestro*, teacher, nice family. Nice."

She told me who was sick, whose daughters had just had babies, or who was getting married, and what kind of people they had been in Sicily.

Gram didn't like everyone in our neighbourhood. She positively hated Mr Tancredi. She didn't say why, but repeated that he had been a bum in Sicily, a "*boom*" as she called him, and he was still one. And Gram wouldn't go within sight of Maria Lucarelli, who, Gram claimed, had once given her the evil eye. "*Il malocchio, il malocchio*," she muttered when Maria's name was mentioned.

LIKE MOST SICILIAN WOMEN, Gram was fascinated by dolls that had a religious or symbolic meaning. One year there was a booth that sold nothing but dolls. Many of these were replicas of the Virgin Mary with elaborate headpieces and hand-made dresses

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of white satin, usually holding a rosary or a bouquet of flowers. At this stall there were also two miniature male figures dressed in medieval knightly costumes, complete with spears, shields, and visor.

"Say Gram," I asked, "what are these knights doing here?"

She explained that these ancient knights were good Christians, and they fought against the pagans, "*i Turchi*," who tried to capture Sicily. (Gram called all non-believers Turks.) She told me that the feasts were even older than "*i cavallieri*," and that they were centuries old, "*mille anni*," a thousand years, at least. Her mother and father had gone to these feasts, and their mother and father before them, all the way back to the time of "*Cristo*." She even said that "*i cavallieri*" were as old as Sicily itself—Gram really exaggerates once she begins telling a story.

GRAM COMPLETED the usual round of visits, then stopped to greet the ceci-nut man and his wife. She waited until eleven o'clock to do this. By then they were almost finished for the evening.

"*Eh, cupari, cumare Cavallo, come state?*" Besides meaning godmother and godfather, *cumare* and *cupari* were terms used by people coming from the same village who knew each other intimately.

The man simply nodded. His wife would stop her work, wipe her hands with a towel, and chat briefly with my grandmother.

The woman smiled at me. I didn't know what to say. Besides, no one expected me to say anything.

"*Quanti anni hai?*"

"I was ten in June," I replied, looking at my shoes.

This question was repeated every year, and every year she folded her hands on her belly and gave me a look of approval.

"What do their children do?" I asked, as we fought our way through the crowds.

"*Tutti e due figli sono morti.*"

"Both dead. What happened?" I was sorry I asked.

"*Furono uccisi nella guerra.*"

"Which one, the Second World War, the one Uncle Anthony was in?"

"*Si*," she affirmed, without saying more, as though speaking about the tragedy would only renew the sorrow.

"Say, Gram," I stammered, trying to change the subject, "uh, well, why does he always sell nuts?" Her hand shot up, a sign that she was asking deliverance from such an ignorant grandchild.

"*Senti*," she commanded. I listened attentively. Then she explained how his father had begun the trade. Naturally, *cupari* Michele had taken over when his father became too old. He had learned from his father to fill the cauldron with sand. Each nut was surrounded and buried and actually roasted by the heated sand. Since the sand was constantly stirred, none of the nuts settled on the bottom and burned. The movements and rhythm that *cupari* Michele used to stir the sand were the same as those of his father. His father had stressed that the nuts had to be roasted gradually and evenly if they were to be enjoyed and sold, and *cupari* Michele had learned his trade well. During the week he climbed the slopes of Etna a few hours after midnight, then returned to dry and roast the nuts until the scorching sun told him it was time to stop. Everyone respected *cupari* Michele, for he never missed a day of work and he was a good provider. Later he had married *cumare* Maria and the two had become inseparable, like two hands working together towards a common goal. Then came the earthquake, and the boat trip when people were packed together like sheep. Here Gram became silent. The trip and the early days in the New World were painful, and she would not talk about them. I said no more, but vague thoughts of Sicily where fuming Etna still ruled the island and dictated the fate of the people lingered in my mind.

WHEN I RETURNED to the feast, my favourite habit was to eat the endless supply of food while I watched the men gamble and listened to the women gossip as they ate and sold the food they had prepared in their own kitchens. I was thin, but I ate like a boy with a tapeworm —one that was particularly fond of spicy-hot Italian foods. There was Mrs Rinaldi's baked lasagna, Mrs Angelli's fried peppers on little loaves of bread, and Mrs Fiore's

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cookies. The Angelli family supplied pastry from their bakery—their speciality was cream-filled connolies. Sardelli's pizza just couldn't be outdone. I ate the thick, square pieces as I meandered through the maze of stalls and booths until I was gorged and my money ran out. I walked around enjoying the smell of the rich tomato sauce simmering on the hot plates. The aroma permeated the night air, but at times a breeze brought the heavy smell of malt and hops from the brewery which stood at the top of the hill. Occasionally I abandoned my gluttony to plunk a quarter down on a chuck-a-luck or dice; naturally, I lost, and winced at the thought of what I could have eaten instead —especially steaming hot meat balls packed in little loaves of bread. But no matter how much money I spent, I was sure to save enough for a soda and a bag of ceci-nuts. Only a combination of ceci-nuts and orange soda could soothe my burning palate.

My money usually ran out at eleven—two hours before everything closed. Then I went to the place where *cupari* and *cumare* Cavallo set up their ceci-nut stand on the sidewalk directly across the street from their white house with the glass-enclosed porch. Since they were on the fringe of the parking lot, the lighted area ended four or five feet in front of them, and they stood in shadow. Most of the feeble light reaching them was usually blocked off by the throng of waiting people.

While I sat on the concrete steps beside their stand, the looming shadows created by the wood fire beneath *cupari's* cauldron flickered about me. *Cupari* wore dark baggy pants and loose fitting T-shirt. Thin and gypsy-like, he stood bent over the cauldron. His face, glistening from sweat, was narrow and lean, with jutting cheek-bones accentuated by a long, straight nose. Nothing moved but his knotty arms. The bulging veins of his forearms appeared ready to burst as he stirred the nuts. I watched him, transfixed by his flawless, rhythmic movements. He never smiled, never said anything. His steady rhythm had a hypnotic effect. My body relaxed, my thoughts gradually drained. The only noise he made was the hollow thud of the oar regularly hitting the cauldron. After the thud, the new cycle began. The constant swishing of sand as it rose and fell against the sides was regulated by the well-guided oar, like the recurrent flow of ocean waves.

His wife was a pleasant contrast. She always smiled. There was nothing stupid about her smile, nor fawning; it was simply good-natured. She was a heavy, well-rounded woman, built in the tradition of her country, with thick arms and legs. The underside of her arm shook as she scooped the nuts into the small bags. She wore a cotton dress, a print pattern on a white background, and a black belt. Her hair was totally grey; his was still black.

When working, she, like her husband, was all business. Even though *Cumare* Maria always found time to socialise with my grandmother, she had no time for useless chatter with others. I watched the two of them until I could no longer stand the sting burning the roof of my mouth and tongue. The rich aroma seeped into my body, making me faint. Then I jumped off the steps and stood in line. I had cultivated that sting all night. I fidgeted in front of her and squeezed the money so tightly in my hand that the edges of the coins cut into my palm.

"A bag of ceci-nuts," I ordered, triumphantly.

"Quanto?"

"Fifteen cents."

I took the bag gratefully and began my final walk around the feast. At first I just held the nuts, their warmth spreading through my hand. And the nuts were sure to be warm, for I never jumped off those steps until the exact moment he finished roasting the last batch of nuts.

Then slowly, so slowly that I was conscious of every exaggerated gesture, I took the nuts and began eating them, one by one. I chewed them until they became soft and mushy, the pulpy mass soothing my burning tongue. The nuts lasted until even the die-hards at the dice and chuck-a-luck games left. After they were gone, I finished the nuts and bought two orange sodas. The first soda barely washed away the dry, roasted taste of the nuts; the second tingled and burned. After this I went home. By then the ceci-nut man and his wife had covered their equipment and left for the evening.

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IN LATE AUGUST, when I was fourteen and the feast came again, I began wandering through the maze of people and stands where the men and women bellowed their favourite incantations. Early in the evening I passed the ceci-nut stand and noticed that the woman was gone. I felt uneasy, but I thought that she would come later. I returned frequently to check. She didn't come. Everything else was exactly the same. The man, the cauldron, and the wooden table with the mound of ceci-nuts were there as always. It didn't seem right, her not being there. The man moved deftly. He roasted the nuts, filled the bags, and made change with no apparent difficulty. He moved from the cauldron to the table next to him. Half the time he filled the space where she had always been. I made mental pictures of her standing there as she had done every year. Now there was only darkness illuminated by flickering light, except when he stood in her place. She never came. Often I wanted to ask him where she was, but I didn't really know him. My grandmother could call him *cupari,* but I did not have that privilege. And each time I found enough courage to ask him I felt as though I would be breaking an unstated but understood rule. I anticipated a disdainful silence in reply. I was afraid, so I waited until the end of the evening, bought the nuts, and asked no questions. The nuts still soothed my palate, but I didn't go home happy. I lingered until the ceci-man covered his cauldron and table, and I noted a new expression on his face. He looked tired, painfully tired.

The next day I went to Gram. She was washing underwear and brown stockings. A washboard was braced against the side of the tub and stood in sudsy water filled with clothes. The hollow, metallic sound of her heavy hands scrubbing the board drowned out my feeble voice. She barely noticed me.

"Hey, Gram, you know the ceci-lady?" I asked a second time.

"Ma si. Cumare Maria." She kept scrubbing.

"She wasn't at the feast last night. Is something wrong?"

"Eh," she spurted as she stopped momentarily and brushed away a tuft of hair that had fallen in her right eye, *"Morì."*

"You're kidding." I had never fully accepted the possibility that the woman was dead.

"What you think? I joke?"

Barely turning her head, she cast a quick, glaring glance. It was time to leave her to her washing.

From then on I passed the ceci-stand and thought of the woman. I began spending more time just watching the man stirring the sand and listening to the hollow echo of the oar as it banged the iron bottom.

As the church grew more prosperous and the older women became fewer, the church bought more food. Home-made specialities were slowly disappearing from the stalls. The high-pitched beckonings of the old Sicilian women were replaced by younger, more sedate ladies. Mr Sardelli had become too old to run the bakery, and the pizza tasted like cardboard. To me the store-bought food was bland. Since my mouth didn't burn, the orange soda lost its sting, but I continued to buy ceci-nuts every evening. With the woman gone, I felt closer to the man, and I once nearly asked him if he needed any help, but hesitated, remained timid, and didn't ask. I had practised saying to myself, "Hey, *cupari* Michele, want some help?" but I thought Gram might disapprove of my intruding, and I had not earned the right to call him by the familiar term *cupari.* Like it or not, I was separated by a span of fifty years and different birth places.

ONE YEAR the ceci-nut man was no longer there. Once again I hurried to ask Gram. This time she was in the kitchen, bent over the stove, stirring the pots of simmering food with a wooden spoon, occasionally raising it to her mouth to taste the sauce. Her back was towards me. I watched her for what seemed to be a long time.

"Say, Gram, did the ceci-man die?" I finally asked, louder than I intended.

"Si, sei mesi fa, non sapesti?"

"No," I whimpered, barely holding back tears, though I didn't understand the reason for them.

He had been dead six months, and I hadn't been aware. I remained silent. Gram turned,

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wiped her hands on her apron and came to me. Sitting down, she drew me close to her, holding my shoulders in her strong hands. At first she drew in her chin and squinted her left eye, as though puzzled and slightly angry, but soon the expression became pleasant, almost happy.

"Senti, cumare and *cupari erano così*, like this." She intertwined her fingers and pushed her hands sharply out, as if locking her fingers.

"When she die, he no happy." Her hands came apart and she shook her right hand at me, with index finger out in the manner of scolding.

"Now, they like this, *come prima.*" The fingers were intertwined again.

I smiled. For the old people, death was fulfilment, completion. I had seen them bickering, cursing one another, stop talking to each other for days, but I had also seen them gay at weddings, mournful at funerals, and fiercely proud when another grandchild was born. A wife or husband was not happy alone. They had left one life of hardship, abandoned the land, their only form of estate, and created another. When one spouse died, the other faced life stoically and waited patiently.

"E meglio così, better like this. *Capisti?"*

I sensed a stillness in my grandmother, probably coming from her own longing, her own sorrow of loss. For the first time I recognised her as an old woman, mortal, vulnerable.

Still, I was not satisfied. Gram explained the old people's attitudes, but I did not cry for them. I was reluctant to say anything. My breathing became heavier.

"Well, who . . . who will take their place when they're gone? Will there be another ceci-man and lady, like . . . like," I summoned my courage, "like *cumare* and *cupari* Cavallo?" Pronouncing the words I had been afraid to use when they were alive somehow bound me to them now that they were dead.

"No, *non credo.* I don't think so."

With these words, words I could not utter myself, everything changed for me. No longer would I roam the feasts or visit Gram's club or chat with the old people in carefree acceptance, unaware that the traditions I loved were passing before my eyes, never to be replaced, never. For after this moment I was condemned to watch everything I loved with morbid fascination, as an observer aware that they would someday vanish.

Gram's hands were still on my shoulders. Our family never showed overt affection; we disguised it with jokes and sarcasm and presents. The age-old barrier stood before me, impenetrable; but I needed to shatter it—to step across its boundary which kept me in isolation.

"Oh Gram," I cried, abandoning my pride, my dignity as a sixteen-year-old raised by Gram to be strong, resilient. I threw my arms about her neck and sobbed. We remained like that, me with my arms around Gram's neck and she caressing my head and patting my back as if I had the hiccups until I subsided.

"Vai, vai," commanded Gram, pulling out a small lace handkerchief and dabbing the corners of her eyes. I remember the handkerchief perfectly; it was white and fringed by red and white crotchet work, tiny, exact, that she had added so nonchalantly while chatting with her friends.

Gram's command was the signal breaking the spell, and I obeyed her and dashed out of the door. I needed to be alone, to let the truth of her statement sink in by slow degrees of acceptance, instead of one great, overwhelming flood. Before I was out of the door, Gram was already stirring her pots.

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Malraux & de Gaulle

An Interview

YOUR NEW BOOK, Les Chênes qu'on abat, *has brought you a large correspondence, dealing with the book itself, reviews of it, and interviews you have given. Did you find the letters from strangers more interesting because they were the least predictable?*

ANDRÉ MALRAUX: Let me start with the anonymous letters. The best are the ones beginning, "*Cher vieux brigand* (You old scoundrel)." Then there's the one which talks about "Your dialogue between Babar and Puss-in-boots", which isn't bad. The worst are the ones which say, "Down with the felled oaks". Then there are the letters which are unfriendly but signed—"It is true that your General was disinterested, but then, he was deaf. As for you, you're a figure in Dante's *Inferno*. . . ." Rather flattering. A good many of the letters resemble one another; so do the more serious letters.

A composite letter from an unknown correspondent (unknown but not anonymous) would be on the following lines: 1. Question concerning the General's idea of greatness. 2. Special or frivolous question. 3. Question relating to some literary problem. 4. Question concerning the crisis of Youth and Civilisation. The order of the questions would probably have been suggested by the book itself.

—It is perhaps not entirely accidental that the first question should be on the subject of greatness. Don't you think this indicates some degree of misgiving, or better, the need to clear away all misunderstanding?

MALRAUX: On the subject of *grandeur* the letters can be summed up as asking, "What did the General mean by it?" That question was shot at me on television, and I answered equally tersely. "The honour of France." I should have said more. I should have said more in the book itself, and I shall do so when it is reprinted.

Greatness, to General de Gaulle, was in one sense a mystical concept—"the road to the unknown." But it was also, and more often, an indispensable weapon for the defence of France. Certainly the French sometimes irritated him, but much less than is supposed by people who forget that other nations also irritated him. He had for the French a feeling which he scarcely expressed but which went very deep—a feeling of pity because of the 1914 War. He believed that after that blood-bath France could only re-create the French people by causing them to surpass themselves, and that they could only become French again through vast undertakings and grand designs. That is why he was always less interested in matters of administration. As to his personal love of greatness, who can deny it? But he wanted it also because in his eyes France without greatness was as helpless as a soldier without arms. That is why he agreed with me when I said that when England reached her highest point of greatness it was on her own behalf, whereas France had never been great except on behalf of the world—in the Crusades and the Revolution.

But if the France which haunted him needed greatness in order to exist, he too needed it. And how was he to translate it into action except through France?

THIS CONVERSATION *was conducted by André Brincourt (of "Figaro Littéraire") in Paris shortly after the publication of André Malraux's "Les Chênes qu'on abat." More than three hundred thousand copies were sold in the first ten days, as readers were fascinated—and puzzled—by the portrait of the late Charles de Gaulle which seemed to emerge from its pages. "I have not attempted photography, I have aspired to Greco," Malraux wrote in his preface. In some of the oratorical flights in his present conversation, the aspiration was, perhaps, to Chateaubriand or Lamartine. Given such ambitions, what room remained for an ageing General, recorded in strange musings about Stalin's astuteness and Mao's humanism? Here is a most curious literary document.*

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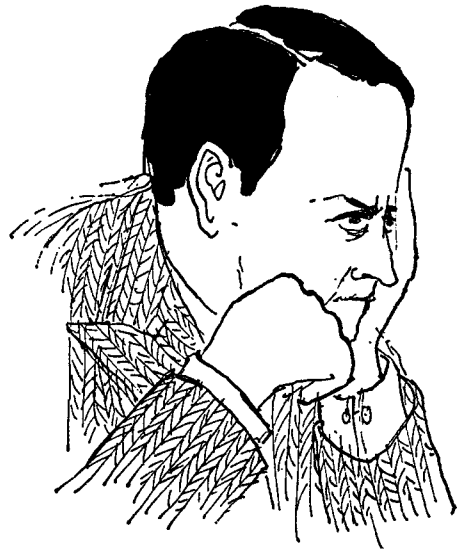
—You apply the word "special" to questions which, however serious they may be, bear a resemblance to one another or reflect a tendency. But in what particular sphere?

MALRAUX: They are often religious. One letter pointed out that Stalin's apophthegm, "In the end, death is the only winner", is answered by the General's phrase, "*Il y a la contemplation*"—interpreting contemplation in in its theological sense, notably that of St Bernard de Clairvaux; and bearing in mind that, as the General knew, Clairvaux is next door to Colombey.

Another correspondent said to me, wrongly, I think, but not without force: "Perhaps when you seem to be looking for great men you are really looking for saints."

Another asked: "Do you think that the crisis in our civilisation is infecting China?" (No, I do not.)

Apart from religion there are what I have called frivolous subjects. Particularly cats. The writers tell me stories. For example, one about a farmer's wife, a kilo of butter, and a cat. There's a knock at the door. The cat's asleep and so it won't touch the butter. The farmer's wife goes out, and when she comes back, after a chat with the postman, the butter is gone. The cat is pretending to be asleep. "You can't fool me," she says, and picks it up and weighs it—exactly a kilo! "So what's become of the cat?"



—Most of the reviews mention the similarity of "tone" or "style", so that the speakers, Charles de Gaulle and André Malraux, are virtually indistinguishable. The strange thing is that people find this surprising. But it raises a technical point which may throw some light on the real nature of a meeting on two levels—that of history, and that of literary history. How did you work? By means of notes made immediately afterwards or from memory? And what was the transforming effect of memory?

MALRAUX: Snow that winter had made the road impassable so I had to go back to Paris by train. I made notes for three hours, dealing entirely with General de Gaulle's ideas and utterances, and with the general atmosphere, the snow and the forest. I felt, and rightly, that his words would enable me to recall my own. Later I asked Colonel d'Escrienne to tell me what he remembered, and this helped me to fill in the gaps.

And then I wrote the book. I think that on the whole my memory was accurate. (You must not forget that there are a good many recollections of past events, evoked by our conversation.) As for transformation—well, it was not quite that. I had a strange feeling during that interview, not at all as though it were an ordinary visit. There were certain phrases the General used ("*Et je compte sur vous pour le dire*") which had a testamentary ring. I have tried in the book to catch my feeling at the time, deepened by the impression made on me by the funeral.

—The last time we met you said to me, "The snow is important in Les Chênes, *just as the fog is in* Macbeth." *Can you tell me more exactly what the snow in this context represents, heralds, symbolises or allows?*

MALRAUX: What I meant was that this was not essentially a conversation between the General and myself but rather a dialogue, through me, between the General and History, and a communion with the trees, darkness, and snow. Hence the last sentence, "*La nuit tombe—la nuit, qui ne connaît pas l'histoire.*" (Night is falling—night that knows no history.)

—And hence the complaint, made by precisely the people who were looking, not for a literary essay in the manner of the Antimémoires *but for a word-for-word account of that interview —"One doesn't always know which of them is speaking."*

MALRAUX: That may be so when the sentences are short. But it seems to me that the General's voice is recognisable when he is expounding his views and when he adopts the note of high-minded banter that is so dear to his imitators.

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—Another complaint is that there are reminiscences—for example, "Dim lights flickering in the back-alleys of Benares, and anciently in the alleyways of Ur and Babylon, with the barking of dogs in the heart of the starlit night"—images taken from the Antimémoires *which are the delight of your parodists.*

MALRAUX: The whole book forms part of the second volume of the *Antimémoires,* and those echoes establish the continuity. In the same way I recall conversations with General de Gaulle published in the first volume.

—What is much more interesting is the assertion, "We know of no other dialogue between a great historical figure and a great artist, painter, writer or musician." Can you suggest any precedents?

MALRAUX: Possibly Chateaubriand's *Dialogues des morts* (although I don't think so); the Socratic Dialogues; and Montesquieu, here and there, in his *Dialogue de Sylla et d'Eucrate* which I have since re-read. I am told incidentally that this major work is at present unprocurable except in the *Pléiade* edition, which I find strange. Sulla, retired to his "Colombey" at Tibur, is certainly a disturbing prefiguration. "I believed that I had fulfilled my destiny when I had no more great things to do. The slow enforcement of the laws, the discipline of a militia at peace, my mind cannot occupy itself with such things." And again: "Because I no longer have lictors am I any the less Sulla?" But the differences are as striking as the analogies. The terrible Sulla is more like Stalin than de Gaulle. Montesquieu's characters are alone in the forefront of the stage, like the figures in the Pompeii paintings which stand out from the background, in front of it and not a part of it. Also, Sulla only discusses his own actions and his own retirement. The parallels are instructive when one considers that the two texts, Montesquieu's and my own, are separated by 250 years.

—You have remarked that, apart from the literary problems relating to your own work, some readers have wondered about the General's approach to literature. A typical question is: "How could he enjoy both Claudel and Rostand?"

MALRAUX: When I asked him he replied, "*On aime toujour sa jeunesse.*" But it is not as simple as that. I never heard him talk about Rostand, only about *Cyrano. Cyrano* is a strange work. Once when François Mauriac and I were discussing it, without finding much to say in its favour, we discovered that we both knew it almost by heart. The impact of that play is partly extra-literary, just as the impact of *Carmen,* the greatest of all successes in its own field, is partly extra-musical. *Carmen* is so to speak on the margin of music, even Bizet's music, just as the voices of Damia and of Edith Piaf are on the margin of song.

—General de Gaulle entitled his memoirs "Mémoires d'espoir (Memories of Hope)." *Does not your own book express the exact opposite? All its readers have been struck by the note of pessimism, the concern for the state of the world. Jean Cau headed his review: "De Gaulle, a pessimist who all his life played the card of hope." Is that the answer?*

MALRAUX: Certainly my book reports a rather tragical conversation, but perhaps General de Gaulle was in a black mood that day, and perhaps this was because he was trying to sum up and had been questioning himself more than usual. He had finished the first volume of the *Mémoires d'espoir,* which was written on the whole on a note of great serenity. Perhaps our meeting had a vaguely opposite effect. Colonel d'Escrienne, who went with me and was present part of the time (the talk at lunch was not bitter) wrote to me later that the General had been very much calmer during the previous week and the week that followed.

—Arising out of that there is another question that occurs more than once. "Was this man who bore the burden of France's future a man of the past?"

MALRAUX: The reasons for considering him *un homme de passé* seem to me rather superficial—fondness (possibly military) for ceremonial, obsession with a power which France no longer possessed, belief in French continuity, and so on. To argue that the de Gaulle régime was like that of Louis XIV is preposterous. People treat de Gaulle's sense and knowledge of history as though it were something belonging to the past; it was a living passion as obsessive as that which a great many men of the Left still have for the Revolution. For him history was, first and foremost, the biography of France.

When it comes to the future we must first consider the present. After 1945 General de Gaulle believed that what he called "electoral democracy" was finished. It seemed to him that the world had entered upon one of its great mutations—the world and especially France. This was a deep and powerful feeling which increased his natural inflexi-

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bility. He said with a touch of irony: "The more violent the storm, the more firmly must the ship be steered." The events of May 1968 disconcerted him both by their violence and by the conjunction of the trade-union and workers' movements. But when, in connection with the students, I talked about a *crise de civilisation* he at once agreed. When he talked about new institutions he was not thinking only of the 1958 Constitution.

What he had in mind was the feeling that we were at the end of a civilisation, and the hope that he might give France a structure which would enable her to sustain the period of mutation and eventual metamorphosis. He often thought that between the Fourth Republic and the coming state the difference would be no less than that between the government of Louis IX and the government of Philippe le Bel, or between those of the Convention and Napoleon. He said to me more than once in 1968: "It may be that Mao Tse-tung and I are the last humanist chiefs of state. Our successors will be men of a different kind because political methods are changing." He was very interested in opinion polls, and he was responsible for the first million francs subsidy which enabled the *I.F.O.P.* to be started. There was nothing hostile in his resolve to transform the Senate, although the majority of senators were hostile to him. He regarded the Senate as the expression of agricultural France, in which representation of the big landed proprietors had been legitimate; but he wanted a Senate representing a different France.

—The General does not seem to have made this clear in the conversations you have reported. Hence the question, from a number of left-wing correspondents: "Why did he never consider institutions on Marxist lines?"

MALRAUX: To understand de Gaulle's attitude to Marxism we have to bear in mind that to him social considerations were important but nevertheless secondary. They were important because he considered it essential to change the condition of the workers. He said so in writing many times. But they were secondary because in his view the decisive relationship was not that between Capital and Labour but that between France and her institutions. He was very much interested in Russian institutions at the time of Stalin. He regarded these as an astute resurrection of Caesarism or Tsarism (incidentally the same word). He did not expect anything of the kind to happen in France, where he believed such institutions would be as inefficacious as those of electoral democracy. He did not believe that the coming civilisation would be that of the working class. He felt that the third sector was more important. But I must repeat that his thinking did not lose itself in categories. He believed that the new, technocratic civilisation would evolve its own institutions. In many respects he was a Philippe le Bel looking for law-makers who would bring him their own *états généraux*.

But he also believed that these institutions would only come into being if the new civilisation surmounted a crisis of which he was very much aware and which he held to be above all a crisis of youth, not only in France.

NOW WE HAVE COME *to the heart of the matter. It is as though the whole of that conversation at Colombey were overshadowed by the General's apprehension (and your own) of a crisis of civilisation or a crisis of youth. Nearly all the letters you have received refer to this.*

MALRAUX: I think the General shared my own fundamental belief that this crisis has arisen out of the absence—the unprecedented absence—of supreme values.

For him these values existed in three contexts—the Nation, Catholicism, and a kind of Stoicism. He understood the force of other values, as is shown by what he said about Russia; but he was disconcerted by the absence of values, subversion for its own sake and not for any preconceived end. Nor did he believe that *contestation* would destroy the supreme values, because in his view it was the absence of those values that led to *contestation*. He believed they had been destroyed by the primacy of science. The part played by science in our civilisation is unlike the part it has played in any other, because of its very nature and the colossal power it gives us. Today, for the first time, man can seek to destroy the earth. The 19th century credited science with the possibility, even the near possibility, of an experimental understanding of the world. Science had not yet solved any fundamental problems but would eventually solve them. Our civilisation invented a new supreme value without knowing what part it would play: the value of the future.

In the event science has not replaced those supreme values which were the justification of human life, and we know now that it never will. It has no moral implications. And even if truth were its highest value it could not answer the question to which the religions sup-

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plied an answer: *que fait l'homme sur la terre,* what is man doing on earth?

Rome at the end was more or less atheistic, but it was still linked with higher values and already penetrated by Christianity. Marcus Aurelius is a case in point. Before the final break-up an exemplary image of Man had succeeded the Gods of antiquity, which were man's idealised images.

Most civilisations have derived their highest values from religion. When this ceases to be the case we are obliged to answer the question, "How do you recognise a supreme value?" with the words, "By the fact that men are ready to die for it." There are many ways, all insufficient, of judging a man; but a civilisation depicts itself to the centuries in terms of the sacrifice it prefers. Rome, the most profane and the most arrogant, declares itself in the lofty sacrifice of Regulus. The Christians were prepared to die for Christ and the Stoics for the idea they had conceived of themselves. From their point of view the two ultimate values were Social Justice and the Nation. Both still survive, but a genuine *contestation* invokes neither, even when it has a vaguely leftist tendency.

MACHINE-CIVILISATION, of which I once said that it had been unable to create either a Temple or a Tomb, believes that it can substitute power and knowledge or ambition for the human soul. That is because it has never understood what the soul is. The word has a number of superimposed meanings, like all the keywords of civilisations—like Logos, God, Love, Death. I think I have said somewhere: "Does the word God mean creator, the absolute, a judge, compassion or love?" Words become key-words because they express a constellation of meanings. The word "soul" has come to signify, in a confused way, that which survives the body. But what does it mean to those who do not believe in any survival? It suggests something resembling what is meant by the word "heart" in expressions such as "a great heart"—strength of character and magnanimity. Directly the word "soul" ceases to mean "that which, within us, communes with the gods", it becomes very elastic. (You can argue that in the Stoic philosophy a supreme value played the part of the Gods. True. But at least their place was filled.) In these days the soul is generally regarded as a faculty, like intelligence.

It is an imaginary faculty. The soul does not exist independently of transcendence, or of the supreme value which is reflected in it. A mirror which reflects nothing is simply a sheet of glass. "God is dead!"—but we cannot put Zarathustra in his place (and the real one claimed to have his own God). Nor can we substitute knowledge for God—knowledge of the unknowable.

Flaubert's Bouvard and Pécuchet concluded that our materialist civilisation was *une civilisation sans âme,* but it is not so in the way they meant. In the first place, it is not soulless because it is materialist, but materialist because it lacks a soul. There can no more be a soul of *nothing* than there can be a reflection with nothing to reflect.

CAN RELIGIOUS VALUES be replaced by profane values? Undoubtedly. But the political gods are weakening everywhere except in China. The

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Soviet Union dominates its youth problems, it does not ignore them.

Nietzsche asked: "Will Nihilism one day replace Religion?" We need to rephrase the question—"Will the Absurd, that is to say the irrational, take the place of the supreme values?"—a phenomenon of which contestatory demonstrations in cities all over the world have given us a foretaste. Perhaps negative values must inevitably end in absurdity. But Youth in crisis—hippies or contestants—has not replaced the supreme values with secondary or negative values, it has replaced them with physical and mental *states*. Drugs and sexuality are states. The communion which the hippies so passionately desire, the exultation of the barricades, the occupation of the Odéon and of the Mexican and Japanese universities, all these are states. But states, like drug-taking, demand increase, and every form of drug exacts its price. When you have had enough of occupying the Odéon or the Sorbonne you have to occupy something else, or else go home. Youth has always been the embodiment of hope, legitimate or otherwise. For the first time, it no longer embodies it completely. Hope is not a matter of states but of values.

Ardent spirits may argue that the crowd in the catacombs will find Christ. Yes, but only if they do not confuse Christ with the catacombs. Youth attracts demagogues like honey attracts flies, and the kind of demagoguery it prefers does not enchant me more than any other. To those who believe, with reason, that when you strip the stars off the generals you risk having to deal with a set of ready-made field-marshals, I would say, "At the same time you must take care not to treat the young, even when they opt out, as the layabouts of our civilisation. Every civilisation has to be measured by the sacrifices it is prepared to make, and if you think those youngsters are incapable of sacrifice you have a lot to learn. The nonsense is obvious enough, but Dada is not the whole of it."

ACROSS THE CENTURIES a tragic dialogue is for the first time proceeding. "*Du fond des âges* (from the depths of the past)," as the General wrote, the procession of Saints, Heroes, and obscure men who have unshakeably sustained the dignity of mankind is rising from graves all over the world and asking: "What are you resolved to sacrifice—and *to what?*" And from the ends of the earth, from the universities of California to those of Japan, the purest of the contestants reply: "We are resolved to sacrifice everything—*to nothing*."

Very well. But the most utterly Possessed, even of *le Néant* or limbo, will do wrong to confuse sect with religion, or the courage of the Foreign Legion with that of the Stoics.

That is my answer to the unknown correspondent who asks me, not what is to be the salvation of Youth, but what is its dilemma.

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Lament for . . .

We are pounded in the café of the East
War of words
Wooden swords
Lies and horsemen of the air.
We did not kill a camel or a crow:
We did not try the game of death:
We did not play with knights or even pawns:
Our employment trivia
As we slew each other to the final crumb.
In the café of the East we swat at flies.
We wear the mask of life in history's garbage can,
Aping men.
We dared not bell the cat, even at its tail.
We did not ask the blind deceiver: why did you escape?
We are the generation of profitless death,
Recipients of alms.
Our defeat in the café of the East: the war of words,
The peacocks strutting the halls where pride is dead,
The essays of obedient hacks
Staining pages
Staining the shoes of the powerful
With the blood of truth.
We are the generation of profitless deaths and alms.
We neither died nor were born
Nor knew the anguish of heroes.

Why did they leave us in the waste?
O my God the predatory birds
We pull on the tatters of our dead and weep without shame.
No rag for our nakedness is left by the June sun.
Why do they leave us to the dogs
Corpses without prayer
Bearing the murdered nation in one fist and dust in the other?
Don't brush the flies from the wound
My wound is Job's mouth
My pain consists in waiting
My blood seeks vengeance.

O God of the poor toilers
We were not defeated: but the giant peacocks
They were defeated and they only
Quicker than the lighting of a match.

Abdul Wahab al-Bayati

translated by Desmond Stewart

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. . . the June Sun

Desmond Stewart writes:

TO CLAIM *Abdul Wahab al-Bayati as the major Arab poet of the public theme and his* Lament for the June Sun *as the most significant literary reaction to the Six Days War is admittedly to claim much. Poetry is the art which the Arabs regard as peculiarly their own while the June War was an event as ambiguously epochal to contemporary Arabs as the French Revolution to the Romantics.*

The circumstances of al-Bayati's life have helped him to speak for more than one province of the Arab World. He was born in 1926 in Baghdad, a city where poetry remains as popular with the young as pop music is in the west; the Iraqi capital's Tigris-side corniche is named after Abu Nawas, the irreverent poet who remained the boon companion of the Caliph Haroun al-Rashid. Al-Bayati's parentage linked him to three of the strands which weave complex Iraq, his father being part Arab, part Turcoman, his mother a Kurd. After graduating in English from the Higher Teacher's College (the nucleus of the present university), al-Bayati found neither the pro-western despotism of Nuri Said nor its revolutionary successors to his liking. He has passed most of his adult life in exile, first in Moscow, then in Damascus and Cairo.

His Lament *was written in 1968 and then recited by the poet at a commemorative gathering in Damascus University the same year. It was rapidly printed and reprinted throughout the Arab World, even in newspapers whose editors may have felt scathed by the poem's content. Many of its phrases have passed into the currency of the contemporary Middle Eastern mood. Since Arab references and echoes inevitably differ from those familiar in other traditions, I have glossed certain passages to bring out what I take to be their significance to their original readers.*

Notes

Line

1 The poet first assails his own caste, the intellectuals who throng *the café of the East:* this can range from Cairo's air-conditioned equivalents of Fuller's to the simpler *chaikhanas* of Baghdad.
pounded: the Arabic verb is related to *tahīna,* the ground sesame paste which, mixed with oil, is a delicacy enjoyed throughout the Middle East.

4 *horsemen of the air:* these miraculous creatures feature in the stock tales told by professional story-tellers in traditional cafés.

5 *crow:* the Arabic word is "kite", a bird as common as unrespected in the Middle East; since it is rare in Britain since the 18th century it would give the wrong meaning here.

13 The fable of the mice and the cat is familiar to Arabs. The intellectuals are arraigned for not criticising manifestations of police tyranny until first Nasser, and then Sadat, denounced them as major deformations of revolutionary society. The concept of open and loyal opposition is still new.

14 *deceiver:* the Arabic *dajjāl* can also be translated "charlatan"; "the charlatan-Messiah" is the Arabic phrase for the Anti-Christ.

16 *alms:* a reference to the official sinecures which have tranquillised some prominent literary figures.

18 *peacocks:* to an Iraqi with Kurdish connections this bird has connections with evil as well as vanity. *Malik Tawuz,* "the Peacock Angel", is the symbol of the mysterious deity still honoured by the "devil-worshipping" Yezidis of the Sinjar mountains to the west of Mosul. To the poet they symbolise the Arab leaders who dominated political life during the years preceding the Six Days War. It is doubtful if he excludes any leader, however prestigious, from his attack.

21 *shoes* have long had a pejorative association, perhaps because of the condition of the roads with which they come into contact; the wearing of shoes in mosques is prohibited because the worshipper's head touches the ground; Nuri Said, ruler of Iraq in al-Bayati's youth, was known disparagingly as "The Shoe".

25 *heroes:* in Arabic, "martyrs", the term commonly given to those killed in battle, but reserved in Western parlance for more passive sufferers for a faith or cause.

26 In this section the poet speaks for the soldiers who died in Sinai.

27 The word for *birds* has the same consonants as the word for aeroplanes.

30 Perhaps because of their association with various diseases, the dogs of the Middle East have not acquired the respect accorded to them in England. A Muslim who has made his ablutions before prayer must wash again if he comes into contact with a dog.

31 Burial without prayer is as odious to Muslims as non-inhumation to the Greeks who followed the argument of the *Antigone.*

34 *Job's mouth* surely refers to the nomadic prophet's complaint rather than to his much-scourged flesh.

36 *Vengeance:* the tenor of the poem suggests that vengeance is invoked as much against the *peacocks* as those who piloted *the predatory birds.*

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Column

THERE APPEARS to be a fairly large measure of agreement, between people of the most conflicting outlooks and opinions, that during a period which corresponds roughly with the most recent decade, something of vital significance happened in the Western world which has fundamentally changed the way we live and even more the way we feel now. For some, mostly the young, this is a matter for rejoicing; for others, mostly the old, a matter for the severest condemnation, and where possible, punishment. Both the consensus, and the conflict, of opinions appeared in their simplest form in public reaction to the verdict reached by the jury, and the sentence pronounced by the judge, in the recent prosecution of *Oz* for obscenity; for while some violently condemned them, and others equally violently approved, all it seemed were agreed that they touched upon some highly sensitive area of social consciousness, which was in some kind of way the product of changes which have taken place, or come to a head, in roughly the last ten years.

By some we were invited to regard the editors of that wretched magazine as martyrs in the cause of civil, political and sexual liberty and Mr Justice Argyle as a kind of modern Judge Jeffreys conducting a Bloody Assize upon everyone who believes in the true, the good and the beautiful; others tried to persuade us that so great was the menace presented by *Oz* to our homes, our wives and our children that only Justice Argyle stood between us and an immediate and sickening fall into moral perdition. All however concurred that the *Oz* case represented a significant development in a process which has changed, and is changing, the entire sensibility of the Western world.

Of course, there was something highly absurd about all this, as there always is about the Anglo-Saxon race whenever sex raises its ugly or beautiful head. It seems to drive them out of their minds, as if they cannot quite believe that, whether for good or for evil, such a thing can really exist, or ever has existed until now. By now indeed, they seem to be so far gone in their obsession with the subject that they tend to regard it as some fantastic invention of their own whose wonders, whether beneficent or terrible, they long to reveal to the world, like Stephenson exhibiting his Rocket; and most of all, of course, to their benighted children, who are threatened with growing up with their eyes closed to the beauty or horror of a world in which Rupert Bear has a phallus.

AND YET, even though one may be reduced to weeping with laughter by the repercussions of the *Oz* case, one may also have to admit, however reluctantly, that the reactions it has provoked do in fact reflect a change in our way of looking at and feeling about the world; it is, I think, true to say that ten years ago the *Oz* case would have been impossible, just because *Oz* itself would have been impossible, and if, *per impossibile*, it had occurred, people would not have reacted to it as they have done. Yet the very moment one says this, one has to remind oneself that no one really knows what exactly the change has been. It is easy enough to enumerate the elements that have entered into it; changes in attitude to sex, to drugs, to art, to violence, to the belief in reason itself, the war in Viet Nam, racism and anti-racism, Black Power, Student Power, Woman Power, Children's Power, moral permissiveness—the list would be interminable, and one would only have to look up the back numbers of the Sunday supplements for the last ten years to find at least one different manifestation of the strange mutation of which Western society has been alternatively the beneficiary or the victim.

Indeed the variants are so great, and they sometimes take such apparently contradictory forms, that it is difficult to believe that they can have one single source; unless of course one were to accept the perfectly reasonable hypothesis that they are all in fact simply inventions of the mass media, eager to flatter their customers' belief that there is no end to the inexhaustible variety of their egos and their ids. Yet the human mind, even in its wildest psychedelic flights, still has an irrepressible instinct to seek some unitary explanation of its experience; it likes to think that there is some kind of method, or logic, even in its madness and that even the Cloud of Unknowing has a rational topography.

★

AMONG THOSE who now offer us a guide to the Darkest Africa of the recent past must now be counted the editors of *Esquire*,

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whose contribution takes the form of a massive 1000-page volume composed of articles written for their magazine during the 'sixties, though the time-scheme is slightly blurred at the edges. For they are so convinced of the unique character of the period through which we have just passed as to be able to date its opening precisely; the 'sixties began "ten months after the turn of the year when, in his television debate with Jack Kennedy, Richard Nixon's face signalled defeat", but they seem to have petered out badly at the end with another television confrontation between William Buckley Jr and Gore Vidal. *Esquire*, however, has no doubt about the character of the epoch, despite this apparent anti-climax; as the title of their anthology, *Smiling Through the Apocalypse*,[1] indicates, it was the age when the seven seals were loosed, the book of Revelations was opened, and the Four Horsemen rode again. Indeed, its editors feel sufficiently confident that in the 'sixties New York was a New Patmos and themselves a kind of collective St John the Divine that they do not hesitate to address us in his own words: "Those that have ears to hear, let them hear", they tell us, adding that "in the apocalyptic 'sixties the message came through clearly, for writers were everywhere, sending back the word."

All this is pretty portentous stuff for a magazine whose primary object is the amusement of tired and not-so-tired business men, and indeed reading these articles one is tempted to conclude that portentousness was one of the most characteristic features of the 'sixties; they carry so heavy a weight of words that everything they describe, whether trivial or important, is given the same apocalyptic significance. This air of portentousness seems to afflict equally as good a writer as Norman Mailer and as amusing a one as Tom Wolfe; their attempts to read a meaning into what presents itself as confusion and incoherence give an effect of strain and effort to their prose which rather wipes the smile off the face which *Esquire* presents to the apocalypse; *Smiling Thru'* is perhaps as good a recipe as any for surviving it, but one cannot help feeling that it is too fixed a smile, more like a grimace perhaps, to carry much conviction.

The effort is undoubtedly a genuine one, but the strongest impression one derives from most of these articles is how far their authors fall short of the mark of making sense out of what they themselves feel to be non-sense. Perhaps this is not surprising; indeed, how could it be otherwise, if one judges by the themes which *Esquire* evidently regards as the most vital, or revealing, ones of our most recent past. The rise and fall of the House of Kennedy, the spirit of which broods over these pages like some modern House of Atreus; the Grass Roots of "Now", which apparently means Las Vegas, stock-car racing, topless waitresses and teeny-boppers at a summer school for baton whirlers; Egos, Super-Egos and Ids, that is to say, such typical men and women of the age as Khrushchev, Frank Sinatra, Ava Gardner, Eddie Fisher and Floyd Patterson; the New Sentimentality, which is nothing except the Old Sentimentality writ large; the Credibility Gap; the war in Viet Nam; Creative Agonies, as exemplified by Mailer, James Baldwin, Buckley, Vidal and others; is there any reason to believe that the mere collocation of these themes should give us any deeper understanding of what happened in the 'sixties than we had before, and do they in fact reveal any common pattern except the inability to distinguish between what is genuinely significant and what is not?

It may be that such questions are out of place. Perhaps, after all, *Esquire* is merely pulling the wool over our eyes, perhaps over their own, in claiming that in these pages we can find a significant mirror of an age. It would be more justifiable, perhaps, to accept these articles simply for what they are, ephemeral pieces produced for an ephemeral (and largely commercial) purpose, and for that reason perhaps all the more successfully capturing the mood, tone, flavour of the passing moment. And this one would willingly do, because there is much in this volume to amuse and entertain one even after the moment has passed; what prevents one from doing so is precisely that its authors and editors are no longer content to be the idle singers of an idle day but seem intent on adopting a prophetic role which does not really suit them very well. Perhaps in the end the worst thing one can say about the 'sixties is that they turned *Esquire* into a Book of Revelation.

OF COURSE, if one were to take *Esquire* seriously, in the sense of thinking of the 'sixties as a genuinely apocalyptic age (and this appears to be an increasingly fashionable view), one would have to think equally seriously about what, if anything, one means by the Apocalypse. If one does so one realises

[1] *Smiling Through the Apocalypse*. Edited by HAROLD HAYES. McCall Publishing Co. $12.50.

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that, for the contemporary mind, it means something very different from what it has meant in the past. For before the days of *Esquire*, the Apocalypse was not only the *Dies Irae*, the Day of Wrath; it was also the Day of Judgment, and Judgment Day, however terrible, also contained the promise that, once judgment has been passed, a new day will dawn.

In reading this anthology, from some of the brightest, smartest, and most talented writers of the West, one is struck most of all by how much they lack any sense of anticipated pleasure or happiness in the new order which will follow the doom which they so confidently invoke upon the present one. Certainly some of *Esquire*'s contributors, like Mailer or Dr Timothy Leary, offer us possibilities of a personal release from a state of affairs which is distasteful to them; but their psychedelic or sexual paths to liberation do not lead to any post-apocalyptic (post-capitalist? post-industrialist?) holy city, of the kind which has, in the past, figured so largely in the dreams of every thinker, from St John to Karl Marx, who has regarded the future as something which should inspire hope and not despair in those who will inherit it. In this sense, the Manhattan from which the editors of *Esquire* preach the new revelation is a much more bare and barren rock than Patmos ever was.

Since they themselves appeal to the authority of that other revelation, one feels that it might justifiably be quoted against them.

> And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no more sea.
>
> And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

If one were to take *Esquire*'s chiliastic chronology seriously, one would have to suppose that, the apocalyptic 'sixties being over, one should now see in President Nixon the bridegroom for whom the bride has been adorned; with the devaluation of the dollar perhaps as the seal upon his wedding ring. It is a rather sobering reflection that the New Jerusalem could take so tawdry and trivial a form; yet this, or something like it, is what one would have to accept if one were to follow *Esquire*'s interpretation of history.

Fortunately, one does not have to do this. For the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, is the idea of a social order in which dreams have taken on the form of concrete institutions. What strikes one most about *Esquire*'s apocalyptic vision is that it bears so little relation to any of the actual institutions which enable the great majority of human beings to live their daily lives and earn their daily bread; it is as if it had been born out of a world in which nothing really existed except the entertainment industry. Equally, however confidently *Esquire* pronounces the doom of the Old Order which came to an end in the 'sixties, it has as yet not given us even a glimpse of the new one by which it has by now presumably been replaced. *R*

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THEATRE

Centre 69?

By John Weightman

AFTER ATTENDING a performance of Andy Warhol's *Pork* at the Round House, ex-Centre 42, and after experiencing showers of obscenity in some other theatres, I have been trying to reflect on the implications of the theatre as public brothel. I must confess—and this may seem a damaging admission on the part of a French specialist—that I have never been inside a real brothel, although I once lived for three months in a hotel in Montmartre which was partly a *maison de passe* and where, as I sat translating rather austere avant-garde texts for *transition*, things were going bump all around me. But since I was what is called happily married even before the beginning of time some twenty-five years ago, my knowledge of such institutions is largely derived from literature and art. They would suggest that the brothel, with the theatre and the church, has always been a basic social organism, more so indeed than the school or academy, although the latter—as literature amply testifies—have often combined a modicum of book-learning with vigorous erotic, dramatic and pseudo-religious functions. At a pinch, a society might do without schools, if instruction were passed on from individual to individual, but can it, I wonder, do without churches, theatres and brothels?

Modern English society may appear to have got almost to the point of dispensing with churches, but one has to inquire whether the religious function has not been taken over, in a slightly disguised form, by other activities. For example, does pop-singing not to some extent replace the hymn-singing of the Victorian era? The intellectual content is often just as deliberately abysmal and the hypnotic effect quite similar; they are parallel instances of making a reassuring collective noise in face of the mystery of the Unknowable. I often feel that there is a live, though very raw, metaphysical excitement in *Top of the Pops* which is missing from *Songs of Praise*, as if one corresponded to a religion in the making whereas the other echoed a dead belief. The fact that the former is a kind of commercialised voodoo, with dervishes and buttock-wobbling, and the latter polite and distinguished, merely emphasises the difference in vitality.

Then again, it has been repeated *ad nauseam* since the popularisation of the ideas of Antonin Artaud that the theatre, "holy theatre", should be total social ceremony. Originally it came out of the church; now it should move back to being a church in its own right, with ritual, catharsis and audience participation. Hence the intensity of the Living Theatre and all that experimental theatre of sado-masochistic rites associated with Genet, Grotowski and Peter Brook. There is, of course, little or no attempt to organise the theology of this new ecclesiastical theatre; its god is not the traditional transcendent deity who was thought of as a person, a coherent being, and whose rules and regulations could therefore be given some rational dress. The new god is the individual or collective unconscious, which lies beneath the puny, superficial structures of reason—a magnificent, steamy inarticulate smoking like the witches' cauldron or the sybil's censer. One could no more put it into a theological strait-jacket than one could tame a volcano; one worships it with tremulous awe, and the non-believers are those dull, conventional people who do not realise that they are divinely inhabited or, to adapt a traditional phrase, that they are sitting on a numen.

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I NOW GET BACK to my main point: just as the church has re-converged on the theatre, might we not explain the universal outburst of theatrical obscenity by saying that the brothel too has moved into the theatre? No doubt, the theatre has always had a brothel aspect; up to 1914 at least, it was, all over Europe, a reservoir of ladies of easy virtue and young men of accommodating charms. The theatre-owner in Zola's *Nana* corrects someone who refers to "*votre théâtre*" by replying "*mon bordel.*" Also, French bourgeois who watched bedroom-farce or English middle-class people who attended Christmas pantomimes laughed at jokes that they would not usually have tolerated in their own drawing-rooms. The collective naughtiness of the theatre was to some extent a liberation. But what has happened now, I think, is that the concept of naughtiness has been carried almost to its final expression. Not quite, however, because the physical sex is still simulated instead of being really enacted, as it would be in certain kinds of true ritual, such as a black mass. Still, the exposure of nakedness (particularly in *Pork*, where the girls and boys display their pudenda in a blaze of light, as if they were in the venereal ward of a hospital) and the indecency of word and gesture is complete.

All obscenity is, I suppose, lyrical and para-religious, since profanity means a negation of the sacred. Sex appears to be the most easily accessible form of sacred lyricism for most people, or at least for most men; the universal obscenity of folk-culture is a confirmation of this, and takes that form because it is less embarrassing to blaspheme than to worship. But blasphemy is only the other side of worship, and so the theatre-as-brothel is not so far removed as one might at first think from the theatre-as-church. It is perhaps the theatricality —the playing of the part, the attempt of the consciousness to project itself so as to become an object of knowledge to itself—which is the central human characteristic, and the sacred or profane are only modalities.

NOW THE EVIDENCE of French literature would seem to suggest that the brothel had at least three clearly distinguishable functions; to sell immediate sexual intercourse untrammelled by the conventions of courtship or class; to facilitate the working-out of sado-masochistic fancies connected with orgasm by the arrangement of *mises-en-scène* (this is well documented in Proust, Genet and elsewhere); and to allow the client to be completely frank in word and deed about purely bestial impulses that he might not be able to admit to his wife, or even to his conventional mistress. If one can overlook the fact that the brothel used human beings as instruments, all three functions had a therapeutic value, and the last might even be said, in addition, to be graced by a philosophical point. There is something in human nature which wants to explore all possibilities, to be true to the fundamental animal, irrespective of cultural inhibitions, and to name everything with names so that nothing, however extreme, is left unsaid.

How far *Pork* corresponds to the first function, I cannot say. I did not check at the box-office whether the telephone numbers of the performers were available to the public, but the programme notes, I see, obligingly remind us which of the young men are circumcised and which are not. But I think *Pork* corresponds very definitely to the second function, and still more so to the third. It is an exercise in outrage, and if it has a genuine purpose behind it, other than easy money-making, this can only be to correspond to the audience's own obscure desire to be outraged. It is deliberately and thoroughly nasty, as if to show that the truth is nasty and that some profound satisfaction is to be gained by admitting this and by rubbing our own noses in it.

Not much effort has gone into the dramatic structure. The stage is furnished with a number of characters—a telephone-operator, a bald lady, a fat, epicene gentleman, etc.—who are mainly there to look quaint and make up a background: *ces messieurs-dames sont au salon.* The actors are constantly to-ing and fro-ing through swing-doors and there is a lot of moving about of objects—telephones, drug-syringes and electrified dildoes—again to give an appearance of busyness. The scene-shifters are two naked young men with startlingly dyed pubic hair and blank faces. The centre of attention is a caricature of Warhol himself in a wheel-chair, a twisted, effete *voyeur* with a drawling voice, who is listening to, or provoking, monologues from three women and one transvestite. The main woman is called Pork (I am told that this is an old negro slang term for female flesh) and the transvestite Vulva, presumably because that is precisely what a transvestite wants to be but is not. The two women other than Pork are not really necessary, although one of them has points, and their monologues could equally well be delivered by her. The basic pattern is that a *voyeur*, non-operative and probably homosexual, is listening to the frenzied blatherings of a woman and a pseudo-woman. The

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prurient intellect is lending a curious ear to the peculiarities of physiology.

THE MONOLOGUES are as definite as "To be or not to be", but on a different literary level. One is about the pains of abortion, another about the coprophagous perversion, another about a three-way masturbatory session in a cinema, and the most striking about the varieties of excrement. This last is delivered by the transvestite with the voice and gestures of a pantomime dame, and gives one a sudden vision of the marvellous continuity of a theatrical tradition which probably goes back in a primitive form to the farces of Ancient Greece. It is strange to reflect that the most sophisticated thing one can do at the moment in the theatre, on T.V. or at a party is to say "shit" with a certain knowing, philosophical, God-defying air, when the term has been used for centuries as a swear-word by people who did not understand its implications. It has now almost superseded that other short, sharp term which was the first to break the decency barrier. Not being scatologically inclined myself, I suspect that the shift from the sexual to the scatological is perhaps a bad sign, because the sexual is a positive, forward-looking aspect of the life-cycle, whereas the scatological, except on the level of gardening, is a negative one.

I haven't said yet whether I enjoyed these two hours in the theatrical brothel. Actually, no. I was almost sick at one point, and if we are getting to a stage where one has to be provided with a paper bag in the theatre as in an aeroplane, I shall stay at home. I am too old to adapt to the idea that being sick might be part of the sound cathartic process. If we are to have brothel-theatres, could they not be jollier, more centrally sexual, more directly adapted to the happy perversions of *l'homme moyen sensuel*? There was no glimmer of sentiment or human kindness or balance in *Pork*. The Marquis de Sade would have been quite pleased with it, and it was this, I think, that depressed me most.

Homage to St. Neot

"Performing the usual unnecessary miracles",
wrote an officious clergyman, C. of E., in the last century
about St. Neot, who had other fish to fry,
being an almost unknown Celtic saint
who could get fish literally to leap
out of the stewpond to a pan his servant held
when he lay sick, unable to angle for himself.
No mean accomplishment. Let the clergyman try.

All his legends in glass and Adam
who, dying, had the seeds
of the Tree of Life planted on his tongue
by one surviving son after the affair
of altars, so from Adam's corse
should come the True Cross. Other dubious wonders,
Noah, his chock-full ark, a Garden of Eden
with a most friendly clerical serpent.

One church that no iconoclast has plundered,
too far from whirlwind zeal, on a moor's edge
in absent-minded Cornwall, where a
necessary miracle preserves St. Neot's,
keeps the fish leaping, the seed
growing. And will, one piously might hope,
outlast all weathers, need for further comment.

Michael Mott

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NOTES & TOPICS

A Conversation with Lukács

By George Urban

I VISITED György Lukács two-and-a-half weeks after the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia. It was 7 September 1968, and I had not seen him since 1947 when I was his student at the Pázmány Péter University (as it then was) of Budapest. I had not come for an interview, and, before I left, Lukács asked me not to publish what had passed between us until such time as I saw fit, preferably after his death. Lukács was working on his *Ontology*. He spoke for over two hours. He had grown older but did not look his age. Turkish coffee was served in his large book-lined flat overlooking the Danube and my cup was periodically topped up by a housekeeper. "I wouldn't be completely candid with you if I said that I'd recognise you in a crowd after all these years", he said as I entered his study, "but didn't we talk about Neo-Positivism when you last came to see me?" This was indeed so, but the last mental note I had made of Lukács was of some scathing comment he had made on *vulgár Marxizmus* at a crowded lecture. It had anti-Stalinist overtones; coming from a man so recently returned from Stalin's Russia and close, as he was reputed to be, to Rákosi's Party establishment, it seemed a daring thing to say. The critique proved to be so, in its more finished form, several years later.

We talked in Hungarian. Lukács was as soft-spoken, lucid, and inexhaustible as I remembered him to be from my student days. He motioned me to a stool, positioning his slight body on a low chair behind two piles of books on his desk, leaving little more of him to be seen than an enormous forehead and a pair of oddly curving, sensuous lips. It was a warm summer day, but the windows, which gave on to the river, were shut and the room was dark. Outside on the quay of Belgrád Rakpart people were sunbathing.

"Well", he said, "Positivism is no longer what it used to be. When you and I last talked together, any doubt expressed about its virtue —whether it was the Neo- or the Logical variety—was met with patronising smiles. Today the building is crumbling, and that is as it should be. Commonsense experience tells us that language is no substitute for reality. Have you ever watched a Logical Positivist leap for his life as a car makes for him at a street corner? He knows with absolute certainty that the hardware rushing at him is a car, not the name 'car', and that it is coming at him, Rudolf Carnap or whoever, and not the name 'Carnap.' So, very wisely, he saves his skin rather than his philosophy. This is a crude way of putting it, but then we are dealing with a very crude type of thinking. . . ."

Neo-Positivism, Lukács continued, was no philosophy but the negation of philosophy. A grid of desiccated words falls short of a philosophic framework. We must, he said, find a way back to reality, and that was what he was trying to do in his *Ontology of Social Being*. One was faced here with a profound problem. All modern social sciences have jumped on the bandwagon of Neo-Positivism in the sense that they have taken their methodology lock, stock, and barrel from the exact sciences. This extrapolation from one kind of discipline into another is false. The analogies it encourages are false and their consequences are totally misleading.

"I heard a lecture Thomas Schelling gave in California recently", I remarked, "which seems to have a bearing on what you say. Schelling set out to examine the roots of segregation in American society. He observed that its causes were obscure because even in such a relatively homogeneous group as the faculty and students of an Ivy League university, where people were encouraged to mix freely, they tended to aggregate in groups

GEORGE LUKÁCS *died in Budapest on 4 June 1971 at the age of 86.*

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despite some benevolent manipulations. At Schelling's own school elaborate arrangements were made at mealtimes and on other social occasions to jumble up the various age groups, sexes, and intellectual interests. But the groups re-formed after a short time following exactly the same pattern which the reformers had tried to break up. Schelling found the results surprising and depressing. What surprised me was his surprise and the heavy, social-science equipment that was brought to bear on the problem."

Lukács said he shared my surprise. Schelling had asked the wrong questions. "False extrapolation," he said, "is at the bottom of our failure to understand the specific nature of social change and social behaviour, and of our inability to shape society rationally and humanely. There is this desperate urge to do the 'scientific' thing which is a hangover from the 19th century and reflects the inferiority complex of the social scientist. The criteria which, as you say, Schelling used in his experiment have little to do with a proper study of social phenomena."

Lukács explained that in his *Ontology* he was trying to re-examine all our notions of how societies exist. He was trying to show that the modalities of social change are peculiar to themselves, that they are extremely complicated, that they are not open to experiment and defy analogy with the exact sciences. "The challenge, as I see it, is to reject the language, values and categories of the exact sciences and to coin an intellectual vocabulary which would reflect the unique nature of man's manifold interactions with his history, his culture, his religion, his class, etc."

I ASKED HIM whether basing his questioning on so broad a texture wouldn't run counter to Marx's analysis. If the influences determining social change were as *diverse* as he indicated, wouldn't the primacy of the economic and social factor tend to drop out of the picture or suffer a serious eclipse? Wasn't the thrust of his thinking leading him to a form of *revisionism*?

Lukács said he disliked the word "revisionism" as it was being carelessly used in Eastern Europe. Revision was of the essence of learning. But he was no "revisionist." "I can find absolutely nothing in Marx that would contradict my thesis. I am persuaded that I'm carrying Marx further along the road on which he himself would have continued if he had been able to project himself into the kind of situation in which we find ourselves."

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CHATTO & WINDUS

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Marxism, he said, as a tool of economic, historical and social analysis had simply not kept up with the times. No one has applied a fully Marxist methodology to the radically changing fabric of modern capitalism, or modern socialism for that matter. We were witnessing, he went on, a fundamental crisis of capitalist society. The immaturity, naivety, and ignorance of the young people who were its *avant garde* should not blind us to its significance. Industrialisation, the welfare state, and affluence had not produced the post-capitalist society of a higher order that a great many Western students of society had predicted would emerge after the second World War. The crisis of capitalism involved factors with which the under-developed methodology of Marxism had no way of getting to grips. What Lenin said to American youth in 1920 could have no relevance to a Cohn-Bendit in a French situation. The revolutionary groupings in the West (Lukács continued) lacked a theory of revolution, and were bound to be ineffective so long as they had none. That was why he hoped there would be a renewal of "revolutionary theory" both in the West and in Eastern Europe. But it would have to be a renewal of Marxist theory. His *Ontology* might be a modest step in that direction.

ONE MIGHT, I interjected, stretch Marxism in this direction or that, but could it ever give satisfactory answers to some of our oldest problems? Marxism tries to explain *la condition humaine* and that, as I understood him, was also what his *Ontology* was about. But could it go no further? Some years ago Ignazio Silone remarked to me in a conversation that as long as Communism had nothing to say on the question of death, its claim to command man's loyalties would remain limited. Communism, Silone thought, was not a fully self-contained world-view. One of man's prime needs was to be offered some explanation or consolation in the face of death. Communism was unable to do that.

LUKÁCS: "Marxism has nothing to do with life after death; the mind disintegrates with the body and there is no more to be said. I could never really understand this need to be consoled or comforted. I have never felt the slightest desire to seek any contact with supernatural forces in church or elsewhere. Religion, to my mind, is a substitute for a poorly lived life. The secret of life, and perhaps of the survival of one's works after life, is a sensible and rational (*értelmes*)[1] existence. Tolstoy, in *The Death of Ivan Ilych,* gives us a celebrated example of the conventionally correct and decorous life but one which—as Ivan Ilych discovers on his death-bed—lacked all meaning. Let me say in all humility that, within the limits given to me, I tried, I think, to live a life of reason. Fairly early in my career I discovered certain truths about human behaviour which led me to Marx; and I have tried, in a long life, to broaden my understanding of these truths according to my lights. My framework has not changed. When I die, as I will in one or two years' time, I will have few regrets. I need no consolation and I am not looking for consolation, least of all from some other-worldly source."

But wasn't this, I answered, a very élitist philosophy, appropriate to an exceptional individual but very alien to a man on the factory bench? Wasn't the worker very unlikely to lead a life of reason, or to want to lead such a life if he could understand what it was? Weren't men guided by their passions rather than by reason (as Hume had agreed)? Wasn't the need to hate and to destroy every bit as fundamental to the human psyche as the need to love and to live sensibly?

LUKÁCS: "Here I disagree with you profoundly. As a Marxist I believe that feelings and ideas reflect certain facts about man as a producer and social being. Of course, the road between economic fact and social circumstances on the one hand, and consciousness on the other, is long and tortuous. But I believe that the reasonable life is open to all, subject only to the limitations of man's natural endowments. This is the long-term perspective. In the short term it would be erroneous to postulate any correspondence between being and consciousness; but the long-term connections are there. When the warring chiefs of primitive tribes stopped eating their captives and put them to slave labour instead, this was not because they hit upon some superior morality, but because they discovered that slave labour paid better returns than the flesh consumed in a single meal. Cannibalism was a wasteful investment. The morality came later. By the same token, cultures, faiths and tastes are conditioned by the social facts of history. There are no ideas suspended in space for men to haul down when the need arises to apply them

[1] *Értelmes* is a difficult word to translate. It denotes a mixture of sense, reason, rationality, and meaning. In his reference to Tolstoy, Lukács stresses the latter. Elsewhere the connotations of "reason" predominate, and the word has been so translated.

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to real situations. A more reasonable pattern of existence in which everyone will, within his natural limitations, be able to create for himself a full and satisfying life is something we can already dimly see on the horizon."

I REMAINED unconvinced. Where was the proof, I asked, that the good life was in fact emerging? The more leisure we have, the cheaper the mental diet we demand. The more prolonged our education, the more frustrated we feel in our battery-farm situations. Alienation has increased, not decreased, with industrialisation and urbanisation, even where the means of production were in public hands. There were a great many ordinary human factors to be reckoned with, of which reason was only one and perhaps not the most important. He, Lukács, as a man deeply concerned with the sources of artistic creation would surely concede this point.

Lukács said that in the short term the picture was perhaps still gloomy, but he was concerned here with the broad trends of history. It would take centuries, if not thousands of years, for the good life based on reason to emerge, but he was certain that was the way in which man's consciousness was moving. There would be setbacks, but the main thrust of development was not open to change.

"Why is it", he asked, "that children born to educated parents, who are themselves the children of educated families, do so much better at school than the sons and daughters of peasants? The answer is that there is a slow transmutation between one generation and the next. Intellectual ability is internalised and passed on, though only in very easy stages. Symbolically speaking, the change starts with the act of procreation. Sexual union between Achilles and Briseis was probably a very different thing from that between Curie and his wife."

Would a reasonable man, I remarked, after Hitler's camps and Stalin's purges have cause to endorse a philosophy of reason? Even if one were sure that at the end of the story superior reason would emerge triumphant, was one justified in exacting sacrifices in the short run? In any case, was the ordinary man capable of working out for himself a framework of sensible restraints? Wasn't it rather that—for a measure of reason to prevail in his activities—he would need some of those outside pressures and hardships which a leisured and permissive society would deny him?

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LUKÁCS repeated that the transmutation would be gradual and that it wouldn't follow a straight line; but looking at man's history as a whole, progress in the direction of a life governed by reason was certainly there. "Of course", he said, "there will always remain differences between men's tastes and intellectual abilities, but the satisfaction of having lived an ordered life of reason, at the end of which we can look back upon it as one that has been worth while, is not beyond our ability to achieve."

The Czech communist philosopher Machovec recently claimed (in the magazine *Neues Forum*) that, for a Marxist, participation in the life of society under the guidance of reason was a way of partaking of the eternal. This, I said, was a religious concept—society usurping the place of the godhead with which the devout merge in a mystic union.

LUKÁCS: "A great deal of theological language has been smuggled into the Marxist analysis of society. I reject this as irrelevant. What Machovec says is true but it's a platitude. In a sense every sentient being is part of the 'eternal', *i.e.* of reality as it develops. In that sense a socialist participation in the life of society is sharing an aspect of eternality. But one ought to beware of mixing one's analogies. There is no nonsense in the world to which some distinguished physicist or other will not subscribe and give it an elevated name, usually borrowed from theology or art. There is the case of one famous scientist who said that entropy was nature's way of atoning for original sin. If you can say that you can say anything. You can shift your symbolism from theology into science and *vice versa*. But it isn't helpful."

"Would you not be interested to know", I asked, "to what extent your work would survive, and whether it would give you an entry-card to some form of eternity?"

LUKÁCS: "Work, if it is of relevance, survives its author. Whether mine will is not for me to say. I tried to broaden my understanding of social reality and the way in which it expresses itself in man's reaction to it, especially in literature. But if some of my work is not considered of interest a century from now, that has nothing to do with eternity or religion. I have not written down my thoughts to console myself, nor do I expect them to serve as consolation to others."

"I should have thought", I replied, "that the ups and downs of the 'Lukács-myth' would make a fascinating subject for some future student of social history. Friedrich Gundolf, as you know, wrote a book *Caesar, Geschichte seines Ruhms*, and in this he traced the changing fortunes of the myth of Caesar. This proved a most profitable line of investigation for, not surprisingly, every age bent this myth to its own needs and prejudices."

LUKÁCS: "I should, of course, be interested in how posterity will look upon myself and my work, but I do not have such lofty ideas about my importance as your comparison implies."

"I appreciate your modesty", I answered, "but I should be surprised if your work and your personality did not give rise to a great variety of conflicting interpretations. You will surely be looked upon as the man whose contribution to the Westernisation and demythologisation of Marxism was second to none—to mention only one possibility. And if we know anything about human nature, you will be revered and hated accordingly."

LUKÁCS: "If I ever become the subject of such respect, or contempt, for the reasons you mention, it will be due to the tragic circumstance that Marxism took root in Russia before it did in any of the more advanced countries. Stalinism was a fearful deformation which the communist movement inherited from Russia's particular traditions and the conditions obtaining in Russia at the time of the October Revolution. But we cannot choose our history."

"LOOKING BACK upon your work, what is it you would most like to see survive? I remember a very perceptive series of essays, *Die Seele und die Formen* (1911), which you wrote as a young man. They included one on the poet Stefan George in whom I took a special interest because he was the subject of my doctoral dissertation. You were, I think, not a communist in those days, and you have obviously changed your mind in some important aspects since that book was written."

LUKÁCS: "*Die Seele und die Formen* is the last book I would want to be remembered by. It was a record of my early impressions, but I revised my views as I went along. Of course, Stefan George was a very considerable lyric poet, not only in his early work but even in *Der Siebente Ring*. I still hold to that."

"Do you then reject the prophetic verse that came after *Der Siebente Ring* because it was tied to the cult of George's personality?"

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LUKÁCS: "Some of the prophetic verse was undoubtedly good poetry and one has to honour it for that, but you are implying here a question which I think is not legitimate. The translation of poetry, or of any art for that matter, into hard and fast political and social analogies is erroneous and dangerous. Traffic in the opposite direction harbours similar dangers. The figure of the prophet in George is not to be equated with prophets or political programmes of any particular kind.

"In any case, the author is the wrong man to discuss the implications of his works with. When I finish writing something, my only concern is the next book in my system, and the concern to summarise for myself and incorporate as best I can the unanswered questions of the earlier effort. Remember the episode about the young Schiller arriving in Weimar fully armed with a superb knowledge of Goethe's work. Goethe nearly showed him to the door, for he was utterly bored by being forced to mull over something with which he had intellectually and emotionally finished. The same day he ran into a small boy who had strayed into his garden to collect insects. The child knew a great deal about them, and that had a much greater fascination for Goethe than Schiller with all his cultured knowledge. He spent three hours with the child talking insects. . . ."

I took the backhanded reprimand and changed the subject. "To what extent can the methodology of the social sciences be applied to the arts?"

LUKÁCS: "Well, it has always been more interesting to talk of the Quattrocento in terms of aesthetics than of sociology because Florence in that century produced outstanding painters and sculptors. But there are other problems in that century, as in all others, which the social sciences haven't even begun to investigate. There are, for instance, the culinary arts which are of enormous social significance and have never received adequate attention. Why, for example, is spaghetti differently cooked in Bologna and Naples? This is really a profound sociological problem. No one has looked into these matters, but I am convinced that sociological explanations could be found. Take Hungarian cooking: as you know, unless you give a Hungarian cook a mountain of fat to cook with, she will think you are mean. This is a time-honoured social attitude because wealth in Hungary used to be expressed in the amount of fat and smoked meats you could hoard in your larder. Now the danger of a Hungarian diet is its very high fat content. Years ago my wife explained to our cook that she could have access to any amount of fat in the larder (which used to be locked in Hungary in those days) as long as she did not put any of it into our food. We left the larder wide open. This made her reflect; she began to realise that fatty food was not necessarily prestigious, and she continued to put a lot of lard into her own diet and very little into our own. These, then, are the sort of factors social historians ought to look for, and not stick to the well-trodden paths."

I TOLD Lukács that I had planned to go to Czechoslovakia but was unable to get in (I did a few days later). It was a tragedy, I said, that our destinies in Europe should be in the hands of two non-European powers: the Soviet Union and the United States.

LUKÁCS: "I think, though obviously I cannot be sure, that there may be great changes ahead at the top of the Soviet State and Party, and I would connect these with the occupation of Czechoslovakia."

"What is your attitude to the occupation?"

LUKÁCS: "This is the greatest disaster that has befallen the communist movement since the German Social Democrats approved the Kaiser's war-credits in 1914. That was the end of the first dream of the socialist brotherhood of men. Need I say more? I've made my protest."

"What about America?"

LUKÁCS: "You will recall that the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 had shocked the civilised world more than any other event since the fall of Rome in the 5th century. But it did more than that. The optimism of the first half of the 18th century did not long survive the disaster. It inspired Voltaire to write his famous poem against the *tout est bien* philosophy of Leibniz and Pope, which was in turn attacked by Rousseau, and there was *Candide* with its important scene in Lisbon. In Portugal it was widely felt that a sinful Lisbon, this modern Babylon, had been punished by God and should perhaps have been completely wiped out like Sodom and Gomorrah. Penitential processions were organised. The people were told that the awesome destruction of the wealthiest and best-known city of its time was God's way of shocking not only the affluent and sybaritic Portuguese but the whole of Christendom into penitence.

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"It seems to me that Viet Nam is fast becoming America's Lisbon disaster, and American society is reading the signs of *its* earthquake in a similar spirit."

"Going back to the Soviet Union, I have heard it said by orthodox Marxists that the only class-struggle that exists in that country today is the struggle between the Ruling Bureaucracy and the Soviet people."

LUKÁCS: "That is not an unfair way of describing the situation."

Lukács escorted me to the lift. On the staircase one could still see some of the unrepaired damage of the 1956 fighting. He wished me luck in Czechoslovakia.

Anguished Thoughts on Bangla Desh

By Dipak Mazumdar and Peter Wiles

GIVEN a late-summer deadline, these remarks may well in such a fast-moving situation be somewhat behind the events. We cannot even claim to have presented all the basic factors, since even these continue to reveal themselves in a haphazard way. Both authors are amateurs, except that one of us (Mazumdar) has studied the economic background. We write this largely because "we have to". Bangla Desh ranks below Auschwitz but above the killing of Indonesian Communists in 1965-6. (About 250,000 Bengalis have been killed, excluding those who have died of starvation once in India;[1] the same number were killed in Indonesia, out of a much larger population.) This is thus the second greatest civil massacre of our time. Not even the Chinese Communists, who admit a few million victims in the 1950s, *after* taking power, liquidated the same percentage of the population. We cannot, therefore, conceal our emotions, though we claim still to be objective on factual matters. Mostly, however, we speculate on the far future. One can never foresee, but one can and must set out possibilities, since all policy is based on these guesses.

First a few facts. Economics is a fair part of the cause and, as we shall show later, a larger part of the cure. The argument that the Eastern wing of Pakistan is exploited by the Western wing rests principally on a variant of the so-called "drain theory" which has figured in the literature of imperialism. The "drain theory" quite simply refers to the fact that many colonies showed over a long period a substantial and continuous surplus in their foreign trade accounts with the mother country —*i.e.*, there was a net outflow of resources from the colony to the mother country. The foreign trade accounts show a similar net transfer of resources from the Eastern wing to the West for most of the period of existence of Pakistan. This transfer was achieved through (*a*) a triangular pattern of trade by which the East had an over-all surplus with the rest of the world which served partly to finance the deficit of the West *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world; and (*b*) a systematic over-valuation of the rupee, which meant that the export surplus of the East was worth more in "real" terms than the nominal value of the foreign exchange earned. The few rupees in the Eastern surplus represented many goods, which all accrued to the West.

The trade account of the Eastern wing of Pakistan is shown below:

ANNUAL AVERAGE (Rupee millions)[2]

	Pre-plan (1950–1 to 1954–5)	*First Plan* (1955–6 to 1959–60)	*Second Plan* (1960–1 to 1954–5)
Balance of trade with West Pakistan	−162·1	−283·7	−424·5
Balance of trade with abroad	424·0	355·0	41·1
Balance of trade combined	261·9	71·3	−383·4

The above figures are given at domestic prices. Because the rupee was over-valued, the balance of trade of the East with abroad (given in the second line of the above table) has to be blown up to arrive at an estimate of the "real" value of the foreign exchange earned by the West. One careful study showed that in 1963-64 a unit of foreign exchange earned by Pakistan was worth almost twice as much as its nominal value in terms of the Pakistan

[1] *New York Times*, 14 and 18 July 1971.
[2] Figures from Table 6.4 in Stephen A. Lewis, *Pakistan: Industrialisation and Trade Policies* (OUP 1970). Lewis' figures were compiled from official statistics.

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rupee.[3] Making this adjustment, the real value of the surplus on the trade account of the East was substantial for the period as a whole. As already mentioned this surplus provided valuable foreign exchange for the West to finance part of its chronic deficit *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world.

This is, however, not the end of the story. Along with the policy of systematically overvaluing her currency Pakistan pursued a policy of industrialisation behind highly protective tariffs and quotas. Much of this industrial development was in the nature of providing domestically produced substitutes for imported consumer goods; and a preponderant share of it was claimed by the West (as we explain more fully below). The result was that a large number of inefficient industries were allowed to grow up in the West, and the East provided a captive market for the products of these industries. About 40% of all exports of West Pakistan were sold to the East in the late 1960s. The East was thus forced to buy industrial consumer goods from the West which it could have obtained more cheaply from abroad. Moreover, agricultural exports were taxed, industrial exports subsidised. This lowered and raised the domestic prices their respective producers received, and so further worsened the East's terms of trade with the West. The "real" value of the net inflow of resources into the East from the West (as shown in the first line of the table above) was thus substantially less than the nominal value. To obtain an accurate picture of the real transfer of resources from the East to the West we have to scale down the nominal values of the first line, as we need to blow up the nominal values of the second line. This, of course, increases the magnitude of the transfer substantially. In fact an official report of the Panel of Experts to the Planning Commission has estimated that East Pakistan has transferred about $2.6 billion to the West in the 20-year period since 1948.[4]

A KEY ELEMENT IN THE STORY was the central government's ability to influence the location of industrial and other development expenditures. The planners not only influenced the distribution of public expenditure between the two wings. Since private investment was crucially dependent on the grant of import

[3] *cf.* Moti lal Pal in the *Pakistan Development Review* (Winter 1964).

[4] Reports of the Advisory Panels for the 4th Five Year Plan (Planning Commission, Pakistan, July 1970), Appendix 3.

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licences, the central government was able to influence the location of private projects. The question whether investment opportunities were better located in the Western wing is in practice unanswerable. The results of the distribution of development expenditures are, however, clear for everyone to see. With 60% of the population, the East received only 20% of the government development expenditure in the first plan period, although this gradually increased to a peak of 36% during the third plan period (1965-70).[5] Estimates of private and public investment together put the share of the East at slightly over 30% for most of the period.[6] Dominated by West Pakistanis, and located in West Pakistan, the central government has clearly given a disproportionately small share of development projects to the East.

The result has been that while in 1959-66 the *per capita* income of the West wing was 32% higher than that of the East, by 1969-70 it was as much as 61% higher.[7] The combined rate of growth was better than India's, however.

IT IS SOMETIMES ASKED if Bangla Desh would be economically viable. The preceding paragraphs give a short and sufficient answer: it was viable inside Pakistan so it would be more viable outside it, since the drain would stop. Here alone was reason enough to secede (secession was never formally demanded by Mujib, but it would surely have come if he had taken power since he did not wish to prevent it, and is in no sense a conciliatory personality). But simply to grant Mujib's actual claim—control over economic policy by the provinces—would have been a major defeat for the West wing.

WE ARE FAR LESS competent to deal with politics, but the outline is brutally clear. Every time Pakistan has had a civilian government the East has shared or threatened to share power, from Suhrawardy in 1956 to Mujib ur Rahman with his absolute majority today. But civilian government and democracy work very ill in Moslem countries. (Bengali Muslims have been no exception to this rule and Bangla Desh would not be either. It would be crazy to promise democracy; we ask only justice and an end to the killing). So periods of not unjustified military rule have intervened. But Bengalis have no military tradition, while Punjabis are almost Arabic in their devotion to war. In addition there has been an obvious and deliberate policy of recruiting as few Bengalis as possible to the armed forces. So only one-tenth are Bengali, and there is no Bengali officer over the rank of Brigadier. Therefore military government has been Western government.

There are or were 70 million people in the East wing, and 58 million in the West. Of the 70, about eight million are Hindus and about one half million Bihari Muslims, refugees from India. The Hindus are now the victims of Punjabi genocide, and the Biharis are the occupants' fifth column. Punjabis, speaking Urdu and Punjabi, cannot be understood in Bengal, but Biharis speak Hindustani and that is close enough.

The strategic facts are the least well known. Since a hi-jacking connected with Azad Kashmir (the part of Kashmir not unjustly seized by West Pakistan from India), India has forbidden over-flights. Thus she did not have to make this move after 25 March. She has never permitted through trains. Planes go by way of Colombo, where they refuel, but most traffic goes by ship. China is said to have permitted overflights, but for this route Burma would have to be brought in too, since China has no frontier with the Eastern wing. The "best sources" say no planes are in fact coming round by China.

What China has is a common frontier with the Western wing, through Azad Kashmir. (Kashmir is mostly Moslem. Its Hindu ruler acceded to India during partition, and West Pakistani irregulars seized this part. India does not recognise the seizure, and it remains the principal bone of contention in the subcontinent.) A new Pakistan-China highway was opened this February, so that China has now a land route to the Arabian Sea across territory claimed by India. Until 25 March China's official interest, as a newly respectable power playing ping-pong with the world, was in the Western wing. Indeed her prior decisions to build the highway and play ping-pong put her on the wrong foot, for the revolutionary Communists of West Bengal, the Naxalites, were in spirit, if not in terms of formal pronouncements, pro-Chinese, and have been unable to resist the call to action in the East, with or without Chinese support. But ping-pong excludes the overt export of revolution; and China, alone of the powers, firmly supports the West wing. It is capitalism and morality, not Maoism, that threaten the status quo.

[5] Planning Commission, p.6, Table 2.
[6] S. R. Lewis, *op. cit.* Table 4.6, p.146 (fixed investment only).
[7] Planning Commission, p.2, Table 1.

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The only exception to the last sentence could be the United States. The Nixon Administration is on record as having led the opposition (and possibly been the only opponent) at the Paris meeting of the Western "Aid Pakistan" consortium to the idea that aid should be suspended until a peaceful solution was reached in the Eastern wing (*N.Y. Times*, 28 June). Several ships with arms have left for Pakistan even in July. The Administration has sometimes sought to excuse these shipments as a "bureaucratic blunder", or as contracts already entered into, but there is strong suspicion that it is an act of deliberate policy.[8]

As to India, her position is obvious except for this: feeding millions of refugees for even two years is demonstrably more expensive than a short victorious war. But a war of "aggression" might well bring China in. China would, of course, win, crossing the narrow strip of India that lies between her and East Bengal, and setting up there a Naxalite realm that would rapidly engulf West Bengal too. Alternatively USSR and/or USA would intervene to hold China back. . . . Need we go on? It is reasonably clear that India must confine herself to small hostile acts, like supporting guerrillas and possibly sabotaging ships.

We have also to consider Islam in the world as a whole. The West wing is connected overland to the heart and hearth of Islam. It is the heir to the Moghuls, to their art and to their imperialism. Scratch even a Persian (Persia has always stood at a slight angle to Islamic rectitude) and you will find an opponent of Bangla Desh. In this whole culture, war can still be holy. The West wing can count on Islamic diplomatic support, and even on economic aid—for Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have given and lent rather freely within Islam. Such

[8] *cf.* Chester Bowles in the *N.Y. Times*, 5 July. The immediate reason has now become clear. It is connected with the new effort to "normalise" relations with China. The sequence of events leading to Kissinger's secret trip from Rawalpindi to Peking (while an "official" dinner was arranged as window dressing) clearly points to active cooperation and connivance with Rawalpindi in July, long after the genocide had begun; and this though the U.S.A. has a good direct connection of long standing with the Chinese embassy in Warsaw. The real but unanswered question remains whether the U.S. economic and military support for West Pakistan will continue now that the dialogue with China has apparently started. Opposition is strong in Congress, and it is possible that the Administration will quietly (if slowly) reverse its policy and fall in with the rest of the Western powers.

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aid is peanuts. But the Islamic nations can tie up the UN—and get their own men (such as Sadruddin Khan) to be its representatives. Up to this point the main body to bring pressure on Rawalpindi, making the president read the world press etc., has been the International Bank. All honour to it—but it is a "Christian" organisation.

SO WHAT DO we do? There are many reasons why the British should be cynical and cold-blooded in this matter, and this passage is written exclusively by that one of us who is not a Bengali, and brings the impeccably anti-Indian credentials of a child of the Raj, who spent November 1956 in Budapest and will not forget or forgive the slimy hypocrisy of Nehru's government on that occasion. For Indian foreign policy is in general rightly known for being more hypocritical, though no less violent or self-seeking, than that of other nations. But circumstances alter cases, generalisations have exceptions, and hypocrisy is a matter of tone not substance. The Indian government has done nothing wrong on this occasion, nor should it much affect our judgment of Bangla Desh if it had. A victim is a victim, even if his friend's manners are bad.

Older and more "racist" memories also stir among us. Punjabi Muslims are fine, upstanding, light-skinned, taciturn men: they are the quintessence of what was known under the Raj, in the days when sociology was an exact science, as "the martial races". Bengalis are squat, dark, voluble and educated. Their Hindu bourgeoisie produced that unlovable figure the Babu. They were always arguing with the Viceroy and shooting at, and missing, Sir John Anderson. There is a darker side to everybody's nature, and our actions may well be governed by this kind of attitude—just as are the attitudes of all Pakistanis themselves.

The New Left is of course racist too, in its own inverted manner. Seeking some rich white man on whom to vent what is really self-hatred, it finds only a brown man supported by a yellow man—and both of them very poor. The radical and urgent support for East Bengal is thus left to *Action Bangla Desh* and *Omega,* which consists of young old liberals.

Is Bangla Desh inevitable? If it is, we must help create it before someone else does, and before a few more million die. If it isn't, we might as well sigh and send another cheque to OXFAM. Now the unimaginable must always be painstakingly imagined: the East wing *could* be reconciled to its murderers. For the remaining population is illiterate and poor, and scarcely able to organise. Such people, too, are easier to woo with gifts of the property of the Hindus driven away. Again, what leaders they have left, even from the Awami Party, may well be collaborators. And the appeal of Islam, crudely presented, may also work—was not the Awami Party non-sectarian, a compromise with the hated Hindu, *i.e.* Indian? Besides, India really has talked of war, and a Muslim can hardly fail to be stirred by that.

Since, however, our basic stance is that Bengalis are human beings, we hold this very improbable indeed. Moreover, much of this Hindu property seems to have gone to Biharis, and much will surely go to carpet-baggers from the West wing. It is not possible that the occupiers will be immune to human cupidity and arrogance. They will compound murder with theft, and theft with cultural imperialism. They cannot but conduct themselves so as to keep hatred alive. (The case is in this way quite different from Czechoslovakia, where another very civilian people is being held by armed force. For Russians are not allowed to acquire property, and their local stooges are not, say, Sudeten Germans but Czechoslovak Communists. Nor have they anything like so much blood on their hands.)

Therefore a people's war is inevitable, however slow in starting. It is certain to be supplied by India, and the West wing will only be able to put it down by further mass murder. And that too is a bare possibility: one can, by wiping out villages from which guerrillas are active, turn a population against guerrillas. But the horror, and the aid-giving world's revulsion, have been so great that the Western Army will surely try to use less indiscriminate means in future. The present policy of near-genocide is bold, effective and surprising, but there will now be a partial failure of nerve. Therefore the guerrillas will not be properly suppressed.

A PROLONGED and widespread guerrilla war is most likely, and at this point the crystal ball clouds over. Will India intervene? If so will China? Is the West wing accessible to shame or pity? On all these crucial issues we fear to prophesy. But we can foretell a grave economic catastrophe. That the East wing will suffer one is obvious, but one of the most hopeful elements in the situation is that the West will too. There will be no jute sales—though at present there are stocks. There will be no foreign aid —though there was never so much *net* aid,

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after deducting debt service, and Pakistan has declared a moratorium on most debts. There will be no profits from the captive Bengali market; there will be no tax revenue from it either. There will be the expenses of occupation, and of preparation against India. The only offset is what China chooses to provide. To give an idea of the magnitudes, to replace all export revenue from jute would take 0.2% of China's national income (gross aid is about three times as big).

This is a not impossible figure. China could keep the West wing ticking over, with inflation, heavy taxes, impoverishment and much social stress. And the West wing could hold down Bangla Desh, incompletely but by means short of actual genocide, at least against Muslims. As the British showed in Ireland, and the Americans in their Civil War, and the Dutch against the Belgians, secession is not lightly tolerated. Punjabis are not Swedes (who let Norway go without bloodshed in 1905), and they will undergo much poverty and obloquy for the unity of their Islamic state. But one day their will would crack and after years of famine and murder Bangla Desh would be born—without leaders or administration or foreign exchange or police or army.

WHO WILL take over? Whose client will this slum-state be? If India can avoid war with China over this and other matters, her position will be immensely strong, and she will be able to provide Bengalis, even Muslim Bengalis, to found the new nation. Soviet and Western aid would of course flood in, and a small polity much like India would result. Could it be stable? Surely not. For India's three Communist parties would surely establish positions of great strength during any long war, while Mujib's Awami Party faded out of existence, discredited as having neither protected the people in peace nor led them in war. This threatens us with a vaguely Communist Bangla Desh. India's choice might well be between a Chinese and a Soviet party. If she could decide, she would of course prefer the latter. Now at present there is no strictly Chinese party: China has lost the Naxalites over Bangla Desh, and she shed her previous satellite party, (the CPI [M]) during the Cultural Revolution. So there are now two ex-Chinese parties and one Soviet one in West Bengal. In the East the pro-Chinese parties (Communists under Mohammed Toha and National Awami Party under Maulana Bhashani) have both denounced China. But there is no reason why China's present perfidy should be long remembered. If Stalin could be forgiven his pact with Hitler. . . . All that China has to do is behave discreetly now, and shift her stance when the moment approaches.

How terrible would a Communist Bangla Desh really be? Less terrible than famine and war. If it is the only alternative we are morally bound to accept it, even perhaps to promote it. There are even many sober people who hold the long-term poverty and corruption in both parts of Bengal to be so awful that only Communism could cure it. (This is an absolutely different case from South Viet Nam.) However, a war of succession between various kinds of Communist is very probable. Sheer brigandage and anarchy are also very probable.

We hope, and we almost believe, that the economic ruin of the Western wing can bring about a better result more quickly. It will not be enough to stop aid: a jute boycott must be imposed if possible. That jute is an Eastern product (if any is being planted or traded any more) is irrelevant. All aid to the East is aid to the Army of Occupation and its stooges; it will not reach those we wish to help. True aid is removing the Army. We should aim at such great pressure as will bring about an interim "political settlement" of a face-saving character much like the one Michael Collins negotiated with Lloyd George. The Punjabi Army must be got out with "honour". The quicker this happens, the more of a non-Communist leadership there will be. The stopped aid must be visibly diverted to West Bengal. This is not only morally right, it helps to stabilise the situation there—a task by no means hopeless in the light of the surprising *ralliement* of that province to the Congress Party recently. Its stability is essential to the rescue of Bangla Desh.

China is now a respectable power. She will not go to war if her interests are respected—she never has. She has a comparatively peaceful record, and we must not be in craven fear of her. The temporisation of the U.S.A., alone of Western powers, is a deep moral disgrace. It will not buy her any Chinese favours since naturally China would rather be the only imperial power in Rawalpindi. Nor does international stability counsel inaction. For in any case stability without Bangla Desh is an illusion: Bangla Desh is going to happen. A thing quite unwished for on 24 March became, with all its awful difficulties, inevitable on 26 March. Far more important in any case is our very modest aim: to help reconstruct a world in which it is not a capital offence to be Bengali.

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Intellectuals, Hope & Heresy

An Interview with Kolakowski

Dr Kolakowski, you have been called a rationalist, a dialectician, a relativist, a sceptic, a moralist, a humanist and an idealist. People have tried to fit your philosophical, political, literary and religious writings into the widest possible range of categories. Which of these various labels do you prefer?

Kolakowski: I think we are more or less bound to use words of this kind in talking about other philosophers or intellectuals, in order to classify or stigmatise them. But one may be permitted to avoid them in talking about oneself. I don't feel inclined to adopt any of those labels, not because they are necessarily false but because they can be interpreted in so many different ways.

—You said in 1969, after you had moved to the West, "The idea of socialism is among the highest values in our culture, although it has often been discredited." Let me cite a few dates of key-events in Eastern Europe—17 June 1953, in East Germany; Hungary, 1956; Poland, 1956; Czechoslovakia, 1968; and the events in Poland in December 1970, and since. Were these a part of what you had in mind?

Kolakowski: I believe that the root idea of socialism, namely that the people should increasingly control the products of their own labour—and this, in my view, embraces the concepts of both Freedom and Equality—is still valid. But that does not mean that I believe in a so-called total or global revolution, or in the final elimination of all alienation and a wholly peaceful state of society without conflicts and contradictions.

It is true that the word "socialism" has been nowhere more misused than in those countries where the ruling bureaucracies have made it their slogan. But as to where, in what part of the world, the socialist idea has the best prospect of fulfilling human aspirations, this remains an open question. When, in the West, I hear socialism interpreted in such a variety of obscurantist and even barbaric terms—for instance, the romantic nostalgia for a pre-industrial society, or a Bakuninian faith in the revolutionary potential of the *Lumpen proletariat*—I am reminded of the notion of Hegel and Marx that progress is only brought about through its worst manifestations.

—You yourself lived through the early stages, in 1967-68, of the Polish crisis—the growth of an anti-Semitic tendency, student demonstrations, the demand by the Writers' Congress for the abolition of censorship (after the Mickiewicz play, Festival of Death, *had been banned at the National Theatre); and, finally, the loss of your own professor's chair at Warsaw University. Should we go as far back as this to understand what happened later?*

Kolakowski: It looks as though the violent events of last December in Poland were the direct sequel to the student revolt of March, 1968. I will not go so far as to say that it was a case of planned provocation, only that the political mechanism was the same. This time the attempt to replace the ruling Gomulka group of Old Communists by another group succeeded. But the significance of the event went far beyond the change in the personnel of government. For the first time the working-class emerged as a self-conscious political force. They now know that they are strong enough to force concessions from government, a discovery which they will certainly not lose sight of, regardless of the scope of the immediate success.

—May we look at your personal experiences? In 1945, at the age of 18, you joined the Communist Party. Was working for the Communist Youth the only effective way of rebuilding Europe out of the ruins of Hitler's National Socialism?

Kolakowski: I would say that for myself—and, I think, for many young people of my generation—the deciding factor was hatred of every kind of nationalism, not just nationalism in its Nazi form, although this was the most terrifying. I mean that Marxism appealed to us, first and foremost, as the doctrine of a humane universalism. At the same time there was always a "tragic sense of life." We were agreed to the alleged necessity of violence in imposing universalist values, with the deceptive

Leszek Kolakowski, *the famous young Polish philosopher who played such an important role in the intellectual debates in Central Europe during the last two decades, is at present living in Oxford, as a Fellow of All Souls College. This interview with him was conducted by Lothar Wichert (of the staff of Rias, Berlin).*

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hope that the violence had a self-abolishing power when it was employed in the name of such humane values.

—You once described yourself, in the early 1950s, as "a pure, out-and-out Stalinist." When did you begin to change your position and to break away from what you called "the fetishising of Marxism", amounting to nothing but subservience to the authority of a new Establishment?

KOLAKOWSKI: I don't remember describing myself in those words. They are philosophically inexact but politically true. A great many things happened to upset me and my friends without, however, causing us to revise radically our political position. For example, I remember how shocked we were in 1949 by the chauvinist and anti-Semitic element in Soviet propaganda. But we thought this was a passing aberration which would be corrected.

And in 1950 I had a three-month visit with friends in Moscow. I am afraid that we didn't know very much about the degree of police repression or the extent to which the whole country was affected by the concentration camp system. But we were horrified when we met people regarded as leading lights of Soviet philosophy and social science and discovered their lamentable intellectual standard, their unbelievable ignorance and childish mentality, and when we saw how far Russian artistic culture had been destroyed.

But we still believed that this spiritual impoverishment had a "deeper meaning", that it was the unavoidable price of progress and therefore politically justified. We needed more time and experience to learn the simple truths that violence generates violence and not freedom, and that terror is simply terror and not the road to justice—in short, that the means must necessarily determine the meaning of the ends.

The ideological conflict of that period (1956-57) can be briefly summed up as follows. Was Stalinism simply an error, a series of misguided false steps, or was it, on the contrary, a coherent system whose way of working was adapted to its class-structure? The fact that I and many of my friends believed that it was not an "error" was, perhaps, the deciding factor in our break with the official ideology.

—In 1956, when you were 29, you tried to voice the protest of the workers. Apart from numerous articles and public speeches you pinned 48 Theses to the bulletin board of Warsaw University. I quote one sentence: "The Communist Party does not need intellectuals in order for them to go into raptures over the wisdom of its decisions; it needs them to ensure that its decisions are wise." How much influence do you think you and others had at that time, within the University and among writers and intellectual circles outside it?

KOLAKOWSKI: For a short time in 1956 the illusion of national unity prevailed. I call it an illusion because in fact a variety of social forces and conflicting interests were at work. But the protest against the outmoded system was so overwhelming that these differences did not appear on the surface, particularly since the question of national independence was predominant in the public mind. Also there was a very strong feeling of solidarity between the intellectuals and the working class. This link will, I believe, be the most important factor in future Polish developments. But it failed in March 1968, and again in December 1970.

MAY I REMIND *you of the Philosophical Congress of March, 1956 in East Berlin? The subject discussed was "The Problem of Freedom in the Light of Scientific Socialism" —and two of the principal speakers were Ernst Bloch and Wolfgang Harich. You yourself discussed the problem of "Marxism and the Personalist Concept of Freedom" and opposed the notion that with the achievement of power by the working class the conflict*

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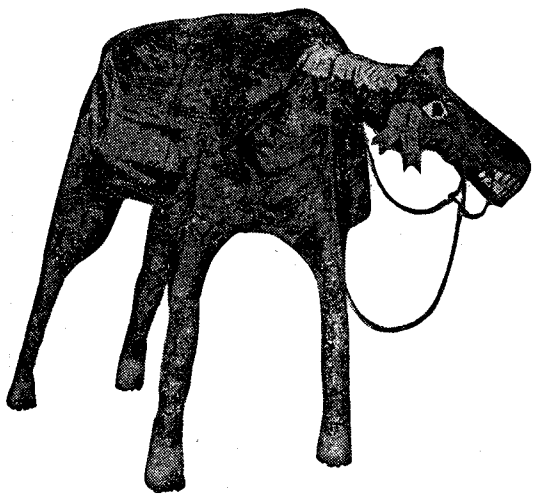

between individual freedom and social necessity had been automatically resolved. Thirteen years later you expressed this thought more precisely: "I take the view that we can think either of a perfect society or of a society in which life is livable, but not of both at once." Is this an attempt to resolve that old contradiction—the Individual versus Society?

KOLAKOWSKI: The attempt to oppose individual to social values now seems entirely pernicious. What the last sentence you quoted amounts to is my conviction that the Messianic faith in a final and definitive upheaval that will eliminate all conflict, all inequality and all barriers is not merely naive but dangerous, since the only practical result that one can see emerging from it, simply but inexorably, is the destruction of every element in the existing culture. A convenient thought for certain minds and temperaments which, so to speak, saves them the trouble of thinking.

Our life is so closely and obviously bound up with an intricate technological system that it is childish to imagine that any kind of political upheaval can change this state of affairs. The problem is not one of escaping from modern technology but of mastering it; and not of how society can rid itself of the bureaucracy which is a necessary part of the technological system, but of how society can control the bureaucracy and counteract its growing autonomy instead of passively allowing itself to be manipulated.

—Religion and your attitude to the Church play an important part in your thought. In fact, your activities in this field have landed you in a lot of trouble. A radio broadcast of yours in Bavaria on "Catholicism in a Catholic Country" was cancelled at the request of the Church, and the Munich director of feature programmes resigned. And in Poland, to name only two instances, you were attacked for accepting an invitation to tea from Cardinal Wyzynski and also for not having publicly opposed the Polish Bishops in 1965 when they attempted to bring about a reconciliation with the German Bishops. Why should an otherwise consistent atheist be so concerned with these matters?

KOLAKOWSKI: I would rather call myself an inconsistent atheist. The far-fetched positivist or evolutionary forecast of the decline of religion in favour of a scientific world concept seems to me highly unconvincing. The apparent weakening of the different forms of religious observance which follows naturally in the wake of the process of urbanisation does not, I consider, deserve to be regarded as a universal law of cultural development. There are signs of the beginning of a religious revival. I would say that men have no fuller means of

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self-identification than through religious symbolism, and that the need for this realisation cannot be dismissed or set aside.

When one puts it like that it sounds, of course, vague. But I'm not able to discuss it in very broad terms. Anyway, to me the religious consciousness is by no means a curiosity, or a subject for the historian or a relic of the past, but an irreplaceable part of human culture, man's only attempt to see himself as a whole—that is to say, as both object and subject.

—Your particular field is the Middle Ages, its theology, heresies and quarrels between mystics and rationalists. Is there a parallel to be found in the false development of religious and political orthodoxies which accounts for your especial interest in this? Are the "fool" and the "priest", to use your own words, only other aspects of the political sceptic and dogmatist?

KOLAKOWSKI: My particular field is not medieval philosophy or theology but far more the philosophy and religious thinking of the 16th and 17th centuries—that is to say, the era of the Reformation and Counter-reformation. There are, of course, striking parallels between the mechanics of inter-Church or inner-Church quarrels and those of political conflict. That is scarcely surprising, when so many social conflicts were articulated within a religious consciousness. But I don't mean that the religious life can be reduced to political or class antagonisms, only that among its other roles it expresses political conflict.

But the opposition between sceptics and absolutists is not confined to the religious or the political spheres. It seems much more to represent the natural tension between structure and development. As such it is probably a part of the human condition.

CAN WE go back to politics? A few months after Gomulka came into power you began to suffer the consequences in the form of attacks, warnings, and regimentation. You were able to go abroad in 1957, but your book, Edifying Tales from the Scriptures, *published in that year, was suppressed by the censorship seven years later. Was there any special reason for this?*

KOLAKOWSKI: That is a question that only the censors can answer, and a system of censorship is not in the habit of explaining itself. But when anyone argues that there are certain conflicts and contradictions which are a constant factor in human life, this obviously does not suit an ideology which claims to reconcile all conceivable contradictions and which treats existing conflicts as merely a hangover from the sins of the past.

—Many of your critical writings sound more like the work of a satirist than of a philosopher. Is this a matter of personal preference? What kind of writing do you prefer?

KOLAKOWSKI: I'm not a real writer because I can never achieve the degree of detachment that suits my discursive way of thinking. What little I have written has happened almost by accident, so to speak, as the result of a sudden impulse. The form that suits me best is the commentary, the footnote on the margin of historical description.

—When your first collection of essays appeared in a West German edition in 1960, (Der Mensch ohne Alternative, Man Without an Alternative), *you particularly objected to the title. Why?*

KOLAKOWSKI: The word "alternative" in German normally implies two mutually exclusive possibilities. The title suggested an idea of man who had no choice at all. But that can never happen. Among other things the book dealt with the alternative propounded by the Stalin régime between the "Heaven" of Stalinism and the "Hell" of bourgeois democracy. But when I appealed for an extension of our power of choice I was not suggesting that we were ever in the position of

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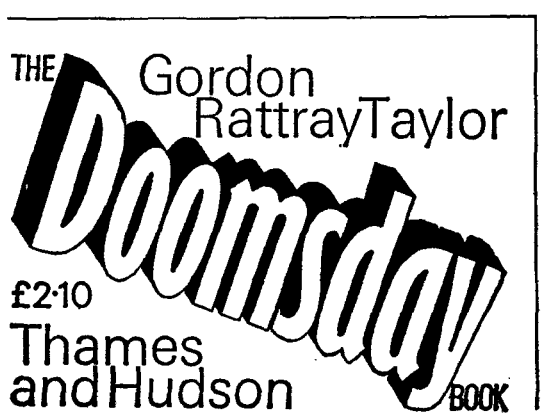
having no choice at all. On the contrary, there is always a choice, although it is not always a choice between good and evil.

—In 1966, on the tenth anniversary of the "Polish October", you addressed the students of Warsaw University, drawing up a balance-sheet of the past ten years and stressing the failure to achieve genuine democratic freedom. That was the last straw. Despite widespread protests, especially on the part of your fellow-writers, and after 21 years of membership, you were expelled from the Communist Party in November.

KOLAKOWSKI: I was obviously so far off the official party line that my expulsion was not surprising. On the other hand, the Party as a whole, in a single-party system, is a reflection of the various tendencies operating in the community, even if these are expressed in a distorted form—that is to say, in terms of official phraseology. When I said that the Party should have no particular interests separating it from the interests of the working population as a whole I was simply repeating Marx's words. But precisely because I denied the validity of certain specifically Party interests—that is to say, interests of the political apparatus —I was bound to be expelled.

TWO QUOTATIONS, *Dr Kolakowski: "The idea that the existing world is so utterly rotten that it cannot conceivably be improved, and that precisely because of this the world that replaces it will achieve the wholeness of perfection and final liberation, is one of the most monstrous aberrations of the human mind." And secondly: "That we shall be capable of raising ourselves with a single leap from the depths of Hell to the heights of Heaven—that revolution will never happen." Both quotations come from an essay you wrote in 1970 in which you return to the subject of revolution and express very forthright views. Are they your response to the revolutionary attitudes you have found among Western students, in Montreal, in Berkeley, California, and perhaps here in Oxford?*



KOLAKOWSKI: Yes. The blind enthusiasm for the meaningless idea of global revolution, which I met with particularly in America, was especially repugnant to me. I can't deny the possibility that this irrational revolt may be symptomatic of a genuine sickness of civilisation. But to be the symptom of a disease is not to be its remedy.

—You had some contact with German Marxist students at the time of the appointment to T. W. Adorno's old chair in Frankfurt. You were attacked on various grounds—that "the criticism of Stalinism should not entail the abandonment of essential elements of Marxism" and that your ideas "afforded no basis for criticism of the division of labour between philosophy and science" so that "the unity of emancipatory Reason" is lost. Did these attacks in any way affect your thinking?

KOLAKOWSKI: Alas, I don't know what is meant by the words "the unity of emancipatory Reason." Before answering I should like to see the people who exemplify this unity in practice and don't just talk about it. Also I'm not sure what are the "essential elements" of Marxism, considering that there are dozens of varieties, all of which accuse the others of betraying Marxism. And anyway, why should I be bound to accept any particular element of Marxism?

—Have the Frankfurt attacks affected you personally—the fact that Western Marxists now reproach you with the change of front which in 1968 led to the loss of your university chair, when the Polish Party held you responsible for the student unrest, saying that you had turned your chair into a "centre of political opposition", and when Gomulka considered you the "spiritual father" of student revolt?

KOLAKOWSKI: As a matter of fact the parallel is striking and rather absurd. I am not in the least personally affected. I simply think it's unfortunate when the students themselves adopt attitudes of inflexible orthodoxy. The struggle in which I was involved in Poland, that of the students against the rigid orthodoxy of the political machine, seemed to me a more natural affair and I felt much happier about it.

—Is there much common ground between the New Left in the West and the Polish Left?

KOLAKOWSKI: I think the differences are more marked than the similarities. The Polish students who demonstrated in March 1968 were simply claiming the traditional liberties —freedom of speech, of Press, of learning and assembly—which to some elements of the New Left are nothing but "treacherous bourgeois

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snares." A Polish friend of mine recently wrote to me from Sweden saying that whenever he had dealings with the New Left he seemed to be watching a film of which he already knew the end. That is exactly how I feel. The kind of language that was used in the past to justify the most brutal oppression is now being repeated as though nothing had ever happened.

—What do you consider to be the social function of philosophy at the present time?

KOLAKOWSKI: That is a very difficult question. But as a matter of fact it is also difficult not to answer. Briefly, I would say this about the social function of philosophy: it must not forget that what appears absolute to us may from other points of view be relative. Philosophy must resist the belief in any complete synthesis of all being or all values, and must never be carried away by hope or substitute hope for hard thinking.

—You have expressed your own views in various ways, Dr Kolakowski. For example: "The possibility of rationalism is the possibility of freedom." Is that the root of your philosophy?

KOLAKOWSKI: No. Rationalism in that sense is a very important but only a formal value. We need openness but that is unproductive in itself. It enables a philosophy to be created, but it does not create a philosophy.

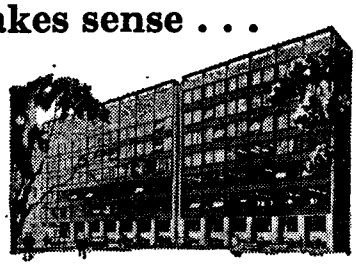
—Critics have taken up the distinction you made between "intellectual" and "institutional" Marxism, in the literary review Nowa Kultura *in 1957. There you treat revisionism simply as the principle of both theory and practice, so that, as Jurgen Habermas says (in his book* Theory and Practice*), "the twofold criticism of dogmatism, in terms of content on the one hand and methodology on the other, is entirely ruled out." Habermas goes on: "Kolakowski is trying to make a virtue of necessity inasmuch as, quite in line with Sartrian existentialism, he holds the Marxist attitude to be incapable of modification, almost a way of life." Does that mean that even radical rationalism is finally based on irrational choice?*

KOLAKOWSKI: I must repeat—yes, revisionism has to be accepted as a principle. But it does not follow from this that revisionism, as a practical exercise, can provide the content to philosophical thinking. It goes without saying that the principle of revision is neither specifically Marxist nor capable of expanding the content of Marxism. There I agree with Habermas. But I don't believe that I'm simply trying to substitute an attitude of openness for the philosophical thinking, although for understandable reasons I lay particular stress on the former.

—When one talks about change, revolution, socialism and communism, the question of method becomes highly important. In other words, are terror and force legitimate accompaniments on the road to a better future, or, to sum up the problem in your own question: "What right have I, in the name of a speculative theory of the future, to disregard the highest human values?"

KOLAKOWSKI: I think I have answered that elsewhere. In my opinion the meaning of the end will always be conditioned by the means. I'm not saying that the use of violence is to be condemned in all circumstances—nor am I a believer in *Ahimsa*. But I think force can only be justified as a reply to force. And I cannot accept such a vague concept of violence which implies that whatever is considered as wrong or unjust must be regarded as "violence" in order to justify measures of so-called counter-violence. That is why I am opposed to self-righteous minorities who take it upon themselves to represent the oppressed classes without having received any mandate from those classes, and who in their name pursue a policy of blind terror.

It makes sense . . .



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—In the light of your experience in the West, Dr Kolakowski, how far would you say that the following sentence, presumably based on the situation in Poland, applies to the West: "We have known for centuries that the execution pyres are intended for heretics, not for heathens." In philosophical or political terms, and as a personal question, what could the influence of your thinking be in the West?

KOLAKOWSKI: I have never been a political leader and I have no wish to be one. I simply try to answer the questions that seem to me important without giving any special thought to the effect my answers may produce. And I cannot be regarded as a heretic in terms of any particular orthodoxy, since a heretic is someone who opposes the existing orthodoxy in the name of one which he holds to be better. But that is not my task.

Moon Object

After the astronaut's intrusion of moonlight,
the metal flag, the computer-speeches, this little booty.

Is it really from the moon? Identify it if you can.
Test it, blue-eyed scientist, between finger and thumb.

Through a rainy city a car continues numb.
Its radio blanks out beneath a bridge.

In a restaurant, your colleague with a cold
is trying to taste his own saliva.

On the school piano, your wife's index finger
sinks the highest note. She hears the sound of felt.

Blue eyes, let your own index finger and your thumb
slip and slide about it devilishly.

Don't you feel the gravity of the moon?
Say a prayer for the dead and shout a vow.

Change your white coat for a purple cloak
and cage yourself a peacock or a gnat.

No, rational, you sniff it. But some holes in your front-brain
have been scooped out. A moon-howling dog would know.

Blue eyes, observe it again. See its dull appearance
and be careful: it could be cursed, it could be sleeping.

Awake, it might change colour like a lampshade
turned on, seething—suddenly moon-plugged.

Scientist, something rum has happened to you.
Your right and left eyes have been switched around.

Back home, if you dialled your own number now,
a shameless voice would reply, "Who? Who?"

Dannie Abse

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A Special Book Section

History & Archaeology

The Meaning of the New Diggers

Rewriting the Human Past—By COLIN RENFREW

FIFTY YEARS AGO prehistoric archaeology was seen as at best a harmless eccentricity, more often as a music-hall joke. As George Robey used to sing:

A Pal-e-o-lith-ic!
Imagine if you can,
A most terrific, tho' pacific
Prehistoric man. . . .

Many more would have echoed Horace Walpole two centuries ago: "I have no curiosity to know how awkward and clumsy men have been in the dawn of arts or in their decay."

Today, on the contrary, even if the aims of prehistoric archaeology are rarely well understood, the subject is both fashionable and popular, profiting from a widespread taste for the "primitive" and the fascination of buried treasure. The first of the tele-dons were archaeologists, and Glyn Daniel and Sir Mortimer Wheeler are probably now more widely remembered than Mary Malcolm or McDonald Hobley or many other "personalities" of the same era. Coffee tables are laden, and Sunday supplements resplendent with the gold of King Tut or the legend of King Arthur.

All the ballyhoo attendant upon great discoveries, and the glitter of treasure trove completely obscure, however, the real objectives of the treasure hunt. These objectives have shifted considerably over the past two decades. Indeed prehistoric archaeology is now coming to grips with intellectual problems as challenging as those facing the biochemist or the cosmologist. They bear directly on the great traditional questions of the nature of humanity—of "what it is to be human"—which archaeology as well as evolutionary biology and astronomy has wrested from the monopoly of the theologians.

The aims of excavation have changed, and the natural sciences have made important contributions to the techniques of archaeology. But above all, prehistorians are asking new questions and new kinds of questions, to which the traditional answers are not often even relevant. Prehistoric archaeology, with modern ethnology, is creating for us a new image of early man, and describing the factors influencing his development in terms sometimes relevant to modern societies. The prehistoric past is changing very rapidly just now. Prehistoric man is no longer an irrelevant curiosity, but as significant for our understanding of ourselves as DNA.

COLIN RENFREW *is Senior Lecturer in Prehistory and Archaeology at the University of Sheffield. He is currently working on the implications of the new radiocarbon dating for prehistoric Europe, and is organising a conference at Sheffield in December on "The Explanations of Culture Change: Models in Prehistory." His book on "The Emergence of Civilisation: The Cyclades and the Aegean in the Third Millennium B.C." will be published by Methuen early next year.*

DIGGING FOR DATA: Already, forty years ago, "digging" — archaeological excavation — had

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become, in Britain, a controlled scientific exercise rather than a hunt for goodies. Sir Mortimer Wheeler's *Archaeology from the Earth*[1] remains the classic statement of the philosophy of modern excavation, where the information recovered is more highly valued than the material finds. The wider diffusion of these ideas has taken time, but "*le système Wheeler*" is at last taught in France. And I was pleased some years ago in Greece while excavating with a simple grid of 4 metre squares separated by 1 metre baulks, when the local press reported that the excavation was conducted "κατά τὸ σύστημα τοῦ Χοϋῖλλερ."

This notion of digging as a controlled exercise for the recovery of data about the past is today being carried to its logical, if rather tough-minded extreme. If, for instance, the aim is to reconstruct prehistoric diet, the appropriate method may be to excavate a relatively small amount of soil and examine it minutely, sieving for small animal bones and using flotation techniques for the recovery of plant remains. As Frank Hole, Kent Flannery, and James Neely put it, in one of the most clear-sighted archaeological reports of recent years:[2]

> We confess a little amusement at the thought that while most Near Eastern archaeologists have dug for buildings and incidentally recovered a few seeds in the process, we dug for seeds and incidentally recovered a few buildings in the process.

Such material, permitting the reconstruction of human diet in south-west Iran around 6000 B.C., tells us far more about the shift from hunting to farming in the Near East than all the painted pottery, and the figurines so eagerly sought by an earlier generation of archaeologists.

The full presentation of such data does not make easy reading, and the shift of interest is sometimes resented by those who respond more readily to the immediate appeal of early works of art. They question the value in archaeological reports of "those daunting and not always very significant pages devoted to soils, snails and other tabulable aspects of the natural environment or of material objects."[3] But the food quest was always a major concern of early man, and it is to archaeology's advantage that the means are now available for reconstructing the diet of early communities. Anything which contributes to that reconstruction, however dauntingly specialised or scientific, is ultimately of human interest.

USURPING THE THRONE OF HISTORY? It is all too easy, of course, for the archaeologist to feel overwhelmed by the ever increasing battery of scientific aids at his disposal. It is certainly inconvenient that no one man can fully understand all the highly specialised reports he may receive—from geophysicists, chemists, biochemists, geologists, botanists, *et al.*—although he has to use their findings. Yet the great gain is that, in several directions, the reconstruction of man's past can work, no longer merely from surmise, but from hard factual argument.[4]

Prehistoric trade, for example, and the whole question of contact between early communities, is now open to critical investigation. Previously archaeologists had to guess at such contacts on the basis of apparent similarities in the pottery shapes and decoration between the areas in question, or of other resemblances between artifacts. Today the constituent elements of suspected imports can be analysed chemically, and the clay or stone often tracked down to its original natural source. Precision can replace surmise—although the claims of the analyst must be scrutinised and tested just as carefully as those of the morphologist working on resemblances of form.

The effectiveness of the rather unromantic study of food refuse in the reconstruction of early subsistence has already been touched on. Indeed at the very extreme of un-romanticism, the study of prehistoric coprolites[5]—preserved human faeces—has given quite unexpected details about early diet and health. The history of technology, too, has been carried back into prehistoric times. We now know, for example, very nearly as much about early metallurgy[6] as did the first smiths themselves.

If some of these questions seem peripheral to the main themes of prehistory—and many archaeologists would now argue that they are central—there can be no doubting the achievement of modern physics in dating archaeological finds precisely. Potassium-argon dating, relying like most of these methods on radioactive isotopes, has carried human history back

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[1] Sir Mortimer Wheeler, *Archaeology from the Earth* (1954).
[2] Frank Hole, Kent V. Flannery and James A. Neely, *Prehistory and Human Ecology of the Deh Luran Plain* (1969).
[3] Jacquetta Hawkes, "The Proper Study of Mankind", in *Antiquity* 42 (1968), pp. 255-262.
[4] *Science in Archaeology*, edited by Don Brothwell and Eric Higgs (1969).
[5] Robert F. Heizer and Lewis K. Napton, *Archaeology and the Prehistoric Great Basin Lacustrine Subsistence Regime as Seen from Lovelock Cave, Nevada* (1970).
[6] R. F. Tylecote, *Metallurgy in Archaeology* (1962).

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to well before two million years ago. And radiocarbon dating has made possible, for the first time, the construction of a meaningful world prehistory,[7] where contemporary human cultures, in different continents and at different times, may be compared. Today we can compare the development of farming in the New World with that in the Old, or the emergence of the first civilisations in different continents. Twenty years ago this was impossible.

These achievements are among the most spectacular ever made in the study of history, arguably of greater significance, for instance, than Champollion's decipherment of the Rosetta Stone and of Egyptian hieroglyphic writing. To show that man reached Australia before the end of the last ice-age, that civilisation had begun in Mexico by 500 B.C.—or that neolithic Jericho was a walled town before 7000 B.C.—are real advances in our knowledge. Today the prehistorian cannot afford to close his ears to talk of radioactive isotopes or trace-element analysis: they are primary sources of essential information. A proper acknowledgment of this debt is more appropriate than the misplaced humanism of "preventing the scientific and technological servant from usurping the throne of history."[8] Again I quote from a recent article by Jacquetta Hawkes which, although unsympathetic to current developments in archaeology, received respectful attention both in *Antiquity* and the *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*. But it is a misplaced humanism which is deaf to any source of information about the human past, or which prefers agreeable although unsubstantiated surmises—for instance the myth of a universal Great Mother Goddess—to honest scepticism. Lord Snow's hypothetical Two Cultures are not as illusory as one had hoped!

Prehistoric chronology is not merely a question of dates. A thousand years here, a million years there, may not fundamentally alter our picture of the sequence of events. A shift of a few centuries, on the other hand, can sometimes completely change the picture. The recent tree-ring calibration of radiocarbon dating offers an excellent example.[9] It has suddenly become clear, for instance, that the civilisations of Egypt and Sumer were not as early as some of the monuments and achievements in Europe to which they were supposed to have given rise. The impressive megalithic tombs of Western Europe, prehistoric burial chambers built of great stones, were supposed by nearly all archaeologists to have resulted from the diffusion of ideas originating in the civilised lands of the Near East. Now the revised radiocarbon dating completely upsets the conventional view presented in the standard textbooks. We find that many of these tombs were built more than a thousand years before the Pyramids of Egypt. The "throne of history" can no longer claim undisputed sway over the "scientific and technological servant".

FROM THE SILENT EARTH: The contributions of the natural sciences do not imply that the major advances in prehistory now come principally from the laboratories of the physicists and chemists. The basic source of our knowledge of man's early past is still excavation, and those "voices of silence" which it unearths. The past two decades have seen momentous discoveries: to show how momentous, it may suffice to mention just three.

Louis Leakey's finds in the Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania[10] have added a new dimension to our understanding of the first men. We may now recognise *Homo sapiens* as the direct descendant of *Australopithecus*, the ape-man discovered by Professor Dart in South Africa, and now so richly documented.

Few archaeological discoveries have been so exciting or unexpected as James Mellaart's Çatal Hüyük, a neolithic town in Turkey dating from before 6000 B.C., its houses decorated with mural paintings. His new and definitive publication of Hacilar,[11] a slightly later site, contributes a new chapter in the history of art, with its handsome painted pottery and its inventive little terracotta sculptures. Although less fully documented than one might wish —and lacking an index—it is a handsomely produced volume. The long and exemplary section on the plant remains, by Hans Helbaek, is a major contribution to our understanding of early farming, and greatly enhances the whole project and its timely publication.

Turning to the New World, the discovery of major sites of the Olmec culture of Mexico has changed the entire picture there of the rise of civilisation. We now know, through the excavations at La Venta,[12] that there were monumental structures, including pyramids, and great sculptured stone heads, on the Gulf coast of

[7] Grahame Clark, *World Prehistory: a New Outline* (1969).
[8] Jacquetta Hawkes, *Antiquity* 42 (1968), p. 255.
[9] *Radiocarbon Variations and Absolute Chronology*, edited by I. U. Olsson (1970).
[10] L. S. B. Leakey, *Olduvai Gorge* (1951).
[11] *Excavations at Hacilar*. By JAMES MELLAART. Edinburgh University Press, 2 vols., £20.
[12] P. Drucker, R. F. Heizer and R. J. Squier, *Excavations at La Venta, Tabasco, 1955* (Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 170, Washington, 1959).

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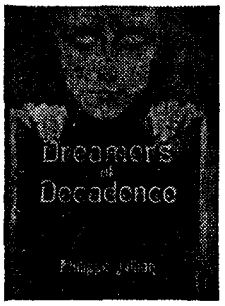
Dreamers of Decadence

Symbolist Painters of the 1890s

PHILIPPE JULLIAN



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Mexico not long after 800 B.C. The other civilisations of Mesoamerica evidently grew upon an Olmec base.

Excavations such as these are continuing to change not only the detail but the whole outline that we have of prehistory.

MODERNISING THE PAST: The new methods of excavation, the contributions of the sciences, and the exciting recent discoveries account, however, for only a few of the changes now taking place in our view of the past. More basic is a shift in objectives which will lead us, over the next decade or two, to think very differently about the evolution of human culture.

Until recently the task of the archaeologist was seen as one of reconstruction. You dug up the pieces of the jigsaw, as it were, and the only problem was to fit them in the right places. If only it were possible to find all the pieces—and some, of course, are irretrievably lost—the picture would be complete. You dug up the pieces, you assembled them, and all that remained was to paint a word-picture describing the past as it now appeared. Mrs Hawkes has again clearly formulated this traditional, and I believe obsolescent, view of archaeology:

> The final purposes are historical: the reconstruction of individual events in time.

On the contrary, the work is only beginning when all these bits of information, some of them relating to individual events, have been gathered. They do not speak for themselves—the "voices of silence" remain obstinately silent—but like the data of the natural scientist they must be made to yield a pattern. When we have such a pattern we can try to explain it, and the explanation can then be tested by reference to new information specially gathered for the purpose. The procedure is scientific, in the sense of being explicit and repeatable, but the end-products are, of course, conclusions about man and his past.

Prehistory here is being profoundly influenced by the pattern-making procedures of other disciplines, some of which have recently undergone similar reappraisals of their methods. For example, two of the most influential books for these new methods in prehistory today deal respectively with classification as approached by the modern taxonomist,[13] and with the investigation of spatial distributions by the mathematical geographer.[14] Both, and much more besides, have been well used by D. L. Clarke[15] to express the need for rigorous handling of the archaeological data. Indeed, in the United States books and even a periodical devoted to computer archaeology have already appeared.[16] The computer is now settling-in quietly as a useful tool in archaeology, not as a threat to the humanity of the subject. Very few would claim that its output can be very different in quality from the data and the programs on which it is fed.

Pattern-making, with or without a computer, is, however, simply a technique, which will soon, like radiocarbon dating or stratigraphic excavation, be one of the special skills possessed by, or available to, every archaeologist. The real issue is what he chooses to make of these patterns, what kind of explanations seem appropriate for them. There is as yet no clear answer here, but already some of the interests can be discerned which will occupy prehistorians over the next few years.

In the past, many explanations and generalisations in prehistory have been little more than pseudo-history, dealing with individuals and groups of individuals and their migrations and contacts, in very much the manner used by Herodotus more than two millennia ago. This shifting of pieces on the prehistoric chess board can no longer suffice, and the focus of interest now is on the processes, formulated rather in economic and social terms, which lead to change. Prehistorians wish now to make statements of more general validity. Indeed some recent talk in archaeology about the "laws of culture process" brings to mind the optimism of the early sociologists, and the words of Auguste Comte:

> I have shown that the physical laws which are the basis of all the theory of motion and equilibrium . . . are as applicable to the mechanical phenomenon of living bodies as to any others . . . the application must extend even to the social forms of existence.

Philosophers of history have been critical of such optimism, and prehistory still lacks any significant general laws. Yet the intention of many archaeologists is now that their explanations should indeed be applicable in outline to changes occurring more widely than at a single time or place.

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[13] Robert R. Sokal and Peter H. A. Sneath, *Principles of Numerical Taxonomy* (1963).

[14] Peter Haggett, *Locational Analysis in Human Geography* (1965).

[15] David L. Clarke, *Analytical Archaeology* (1968).

[16] Frank Hole and Mary Shaw, *Computer Analysis of Chronological Seriation* (Rice University Studies 53, no. 3, Houston, 1967). *Newsletter of Computer Archaeology* (Department of Anthropology, Arizona State University).

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The first indispensable concept used in the explanation of culture change is adaptation. Neither the prehistoric community nor the environment is isolated for study, but rather the relationship between them, as the community exploits the various environmental resources. The American anthropologist Julian Steward[17] has taken this idea beyond simple human ecology to what he terms "cultural ecology", where the social forms of the culture as well as the economic ones are seen as closely related to the specific environment of the culture in question.

Another current concern is the importance of population change. Esther Boserup in an influential book[18] has shown how population density can determine the form of agriculture of a community, rather than the converse so often assumed. The study of population density as an independent variable, and its effect, on social as well as economic aspects of the culture, is destined to be a growth point in prehistoric archaeology.

And, finally, the interrelations between the social structure and the economic organisation of prehistoric societies are now being more seriously considered, largely under the influence of the writings of Karl Polanyi.[19] After years of neglect by British archaeologists, anthropology is again a source of inspiration—although not the elaborate kinship studies beloved of many British social anthropologists. In the United States Elman Service[20] and Marshall Sahlins[21] are anthropologists at last writing about social structures in a way that the prehistoric archaeologist can exploit.

THESE ARE SOME of the themes and approaches which are beginning to interest the archaeologist, as various papers in *New Perspectives in Archaeology*, edited by Lewis and Sally Binford,[22] well exemplify. At first sight they are a little abstract, as well as unfamiliar. But increasingly the prehistorian, like the sociologist or the economic historian, wishes not simply to *narrate* but to *explain*. And while many of the concepts which archaeology may

[17] Julian H. Steward, *Theory of Culture Change* (1955).
[18] Esther Boserup, *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth* (1965).
[19] *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*, edited by Karl Polanyi, Conrad M. Arensberg and Harry W. Pearson (1957).
[20] Elman R. Service, *Primitive Social Organisation* (1962).
[21] Marshall D. Sahlins, *Tribesmen* (1968).
[22] *New Perspectives in Archaeology*, edited by S. R. and L. R. Binford (1968).

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use will be borrowed ones, all will need to be adapted to suit the peculiarities of the archaeologist's material.

Perhaps some of the present optimism is misplaced: Jacquetta Hawkes might be right after all! But I hope not, and think not. Every age to some extent constructs a past to suit itself, since there is no lasting, authorised version of the past to be had. Prehistoric archaeology today is working, I think with some success, to replace the old, inadequate picture with a past which answers rather better to the problems and beliefs of the twentieth century A.D.

Golden (and not so Golden) Ages

Greek & Roman Life — By R. F. WILLETTS

A CENTURY AGO the world of the Homeric poems was still commonly regarded as a blend of romantic legend, myth and saga. The island of Crete, out in the midst of the wine-dark deep, fair, fertile, densely peopled, as Homer describes it, was an essential part of this romance, with its mixed population and its mixed languages, its 90 or 100 cities, among them the mighty Knossos, where Minos used to reign for nine years.

The great Cretan civilisation of the Bronze Age had already passed its zenith by the time of the Trojan War—if (there is no precise agreement) that event occurred somewhere around 1240 B.C. or a little later—and had quite collapsed by the end of the second millennium B.C. For the Greeks of later antiquity in historical times the most abiding traces of this earlier, essentially Aegean civilisation were embedded in their religion, interwoven with legendary folklore about Minos and the Minotaur, offspring of Queen Pasiphae's bizarre union with a bull, and the cunning inventor Daidalos who made the labyrinth for the Minotaur, eventually to be destroyed by Theseus with the aid of Ariadne.

The genuine historians, such as Herodotos and Thucydides, writing in the fifth century B.C., found no difficulty in supposing that there had once existed a splendid overlord called Minos, possessed of a powerful navy and holding sway over overseas dominions. In the following century, after the brilliant epoch of Athenian democracy was over, political theorists, including Plato and Aristotle, began to investigate and to idealise the conditions of more stable, less volatile areas of Greece such as Sparta and Crete. There are modern scholars who have associated Plato's account of lost Atlantis with memories of Minoan Crete; and Aristotle recalled that a sort of caste-system, still surviving in his own day, had first been introduced into Crete by the legislation of Minos.

Crete began to pass into Venetian control at the time of the Fourth Crusade in 1204, a control which lasted until 1670 when the Turks completed their conquest. Interest in Cretan antiquities began to be stimulated during this Creto-Venetian period. The Florentine priest Buondelmonte reported what he had seen (much of it no longer there) on a visit made in 1422. Honorio de Belli recorded monuments and inscriptions in 1596. Other Western travellers and scholars included William Lithgow (1609), Tournefort (*Voyage au Levant*, 1717), Pococke (*Description of the East*, 1745). Meursius (*Creta*, 1675) was concerned with ancient evidence and so was Hoeck (*Kreta*, 1823-9). Many sites were visited by Robert Pashley, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge (*Travels in Crete*, 1837), and Captain (later Admiral) T. A. B. Spratt (*Travels and Researches in Crete*, 1865).

THE APTLY NAMED Minos Kalokairinos did preliminary work at the site of the Palace of Minos at Knossos in 1878. In 1886 Heinrich Schliemann, famed for his excavations at Troy, Mycenae and Tiryns, negotiated for the site. The price mentioned, it is said, included compensation for 2,500 olive trees; but Schliemann counted only 889 and the negotiations ceased. In 1897 Sir Arthur Evans obtained a permit to excavate part of the site of the Palace; and his main excavations were done in six seasons

R. F. WILLETTS *is Professor of Greek in the University of Birmingham. His books include "The Law Code of Gortyn" (De Gruyter, Berlin), "Aristocratic Society in Ancient Crete" and "Cretan Cults and Festivals" (Routledge), and "Everyday Life in Ancient Crete" (Batsford); he has also published translations of Euripides and Aristophanes (Chicago University Press and Dell, New York).*

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from 1900 to 1905, though this work continued annually until 1914 and again from 1920 to 1932. When it became clear that the Bronze Age civilisation of Crete was different from and older than the Mycenaean civilisation of the mainland of Greece, Evans, on the plausible assumption that the name Minos was a dynastic title, called the new civilisation which he had virtually discovered Minoan, corresponding with Pharaonic for the Egyptian. Cretan prehistory could be synchronised at many points with Egyptian annals dated by the Egyptian calendar. These spectacular discoveries were described in absorbing detail in Evans's monumental work *The Palace of Minos* (1921-36, reprinted 1964). Other archaeologists, Greek and foreign, have investigated other Minoan sites than Knossos, including the palaces at Phaistos, Mallia and, more recently, at Zakro.

J. D. S. Pendlebury did detailed exploration and recording of Cretan sites in the 1930s. His work *The Archaeology of Crete*, still invaluable as an introduction, with full lists of sites and references up to the Second World War, was first published in 1939.[1] Since then Paul Faure has thoroughly investigated the island's hundred of caves (*Fonctions des cavernes crétoises*, Paris 1964), while other important discoveries, surveys and speculations continue, and the contents of palaces, villas, settlements, tombs and cemeteries, shrines, shelters and caverns are called to witness to the achievements of the distant past. The achievements are considerable by any standards. The Minoans gained access to raw materials—gold, silver, lead, copper, tin, lapis lazuli and ivory—from neighbouring regions. Their merchant ships were harboured on peninsulas and small islands. Their whole civilisation in its heyday leaves the impression of tremendous creative energy and peaceful endeavour, allowing privileged encouragement to craftsmen of all kinds, engineers, fresco-painters, bronze-workers, goldsmiths, stone-carvers, jewellers, potters.

The development and climax of the Minoan era extended over a millennium and a half until, increasingly from about 1500 B.C., Crete was afflicted by calamities of various kinds, culminating in the arrival of Dorian Greeks in the latter part of the second millennium—after which Crete became a part of

[1] *The Archaeology of Crete.* By J. D. S. PENDLEBURY. Reprinted 1965 and 1967, University Paperback 1971, Methuen, £1.50.

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the new Greek world of the Iron Age and its developing city-states.

Do the Homeric poems provide our first exhilarating acquaintance with the Greek language, a language perpetually to be refreshed with literary (and especially poetic) impulses up to our own times? Views about Homeric composition have had to be drastically modified in recent decades, not least because of the pioneering work of Milman Parry (1902-35).[2] As a result we must recognise the importance of oral tradition in the formation of this poetry, without close regard to the date when it could first have been written down. By comparing techniques of oral composition in present-day societies, we may see how epic material can be transmitted over the centuries by generations of professional bards. Since literacy is not always synonymous with culture, Homer may embody a real historical foundation for the Bronze Age past of Crete and Greece.

Part of this Bronze Age legacy is in the form of writing of various kinds, including the writing in so-called Linear B script, normally written on small clay tablets. Found at Knossos by Evans, and subsequently on the mainland, such tablets have (apparently by accidental baking) been preserved by the destruction by fire of the places in which recordings on clay were useful and customary. The tablets in Linear B have been deciphered as an early form of Greek.

The causes of destruction and the credibility or otherwise of the proposed decipherment are controversial topics judiciously handled in the latest, authoritative and altogether admirable survey of Crete in the Bronze Age.[3] Destruction and decipherment have been sensitive areas of scholarly and public debate in recent years. Mr Hood is to be congratulated on his fairness in summarising the basic issues and at the same time making his own position quite clear. He is throughout an excellent guide. He has excavated at Jericho, Atchana and Mycenae; he has been Director of the British School of Archaeology at Athens; and he conducted renewed excavations at Knossos from 1950-61. Mr Hood sustains a readable narrative with an admirably compact array of hard fact, supported by a carefully selected display of 120 photographs, 126 line drawings, 5 maps, a chronological table, bibliography and index.

Understandably, the new worlds initially revealed by the pioneering efforts of Schliemann and Evans stimulated the accumulation of objective criteria for Greek prehistory reaching back to the beginning of the Iron Age, throughout the whole of the Bronze Age and into Neolithic times. By comparison there is still no substantial amount of evidence to indicate the stages of transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age, roughly betweeen 1100 and 800 B.C., leading to the foundation of the city-state institutions of historical times. A vital part was played, on the mainland and overseas, including Crete, by the latest wave of Greek-speakers, the Dorians—though Dorian or Doric is probably more valid as a linguistic than as a racial term. Since they were the latest to arrive, we have the fullest record of their basic social institutions, including their tribal organisation, which featured as a significant component of the Spartan state, always traditionally contrasted with democratic Athens.

DARK AGES should challenge light to be shed upon them. The writing of a narrative history of Sparta from the Dorian occupation of Lakedaimon down to 490 B.C.—after which date there is relatively much light—is an implicit acceptance of a double challenge, to show command of difficult sources and ability to arrange them into constructive plausibility. A reprint of *Early Sparta*[4] testifies to G. L. Huxley's success.

The Dorians, he thinks, though Greeks, had a society unlike that of the Mycenaeans they overthrew. Learning from the Cretans, and improving what they had learnt, the Mycenaeans had developed a system of government not less complex than the Bronze Age monarchies of the Near East. In contrast with the Mycenaeans, the Dorians were seminomadic warriors, men of the mountains, who governed themselves in tribal assemblies, and who were ill-suited to settled agriculture or centralised palace government. Some idea of early Dorian society can be inferred from the military and social arrangements of the Macedonians and Epirotes in historical times. The Macedonians were highlanders, who for long maintained popular assemblies consisting of the entire soldiery of the state. The king was supreme but he ruled under oath to, and by consent of, his own soldiery. That form of government was very ancient, and it is likely that the ancestors of the Greeks brought it

[2] *The Making of Homeric Verse*. The Collected Papers of MILMAN PARRY. Edited by ADAM PARRY. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, £6.

[3] *The Minoans*. By SINCLAIR HOOD. Thames and Hudson, £3.50.

[4] *Early Sparta*. By G. L. HUXLEY. Irish University Press, £2.50.

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ROUTLEDGE

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with them when they first arrived in Greece. The Dorians, by overthrowing the Mycenaean palaces, restored those parts of Greece they occupied to the conditions that had obtained before the civilising effects of Crete and the Orient had been felt on the Greek mainland. The thoroughly documented narrative ceases in 490 B.C., and the author takes his leave of Sparta at a time when, in his words:

> her people were not yet dulled by austerity, nor their minds embittered. . . . As Sparta prepared to lead Greece against the Mede, she looked to the future with confidence in the strength of her army, and to the past with pride in her political, artistic and military achievements.

SIR MAURICE BOWRA's many publications revealed a wide-ranging interest and endeavour to bring ancient Greece out of scholarly isolation and nearer to the centre of contemporary intellectual concern. At the end he had turned to reconsider the great age of Athens in the fifth century B.C.,[5] believing that some periods of the past stand out with a glowing distinction in the width and wealth of their achievements; though not golden ages in any Utopian sense, we can hardly fail to be fascinated by them; though success in war usually plays some part, it is not always the chief part and the most triumphant conquerors have done little to enrich the human consciousness or its understanding of the world. The great age of Athens starts with the defeat of the Persian invaders in 480-479 B.C. Sparta inspired the Greeks to victory on land, Athens inspired them by sea; and a pattern was set for Greek history through the rest of the century until its closing years, when, after the prolonged conflict of the Peloponnesian War, Athens was overcome by Sparta. That fifth century was the heyday of Athenian greatness, the time of unprecedented advance, its most active years coinciding with the rise and predominance of Pericles, crowded with a series of parallel developments in action and mind.

The view is both conventional and correct; and, as the author immediately acknowledged, the period has been studied by countless scholars from every kind of angle, so that another book might be felt to be unnecessary. The justification is that the past is kept alive by the impulse in every generation to see it in its own way, to find in it something relevant to its own needs and experience. The period is vital in terms of achievement and its influence on the whole course of history: Periclean Athens has still much to reveal and much to teach. The driving impetus in the process of Athenian leadership was the democratic system and the energies it liberated.

The Athenian democracy before Pericles is examined; the course of events leading to Periclean leadership; the nature of Periclean democracy, founded on slavery as an unalterable condition of contemporary society; the new imperialism which transformed a league of cities against Persia into an empire; the philosophy of empire; poetry and politics; the opposition to Pericles; the intellectual revolution of the times; the fatal onset of the decisive war with its accumulation of atrocities.

The crippling defeat of Athens was rendered inevitable by the abysmal failure of the grandiose expedition to Sicily (415-413 B.C.). Peter Green, in his latest book,[6] sets out to fill a gap by giving the only full-scale modern account of the expedition in English, properly setting it in perspective as the final failure of the Periclean experiment in "democratic imperialism."

Pericles exercised an increasingly dominant influence in public affairs from about 460 B.C. until his death during the plague in 429 B.C. The voluntary confederacy formed against the Persians which Athens transformed into an empire initially had its treasury on the sacred island of Delos. The transformation was sealed when, in 454 B.C., the treasury of the Delian League was transferred to the Acropolis of Athens. The Athenians now had considerable resources under their control. It was part of Periclean policy to make use of these resources in adorning the Acropolis with magnificent buildings, including the Parthenon, constructed under the supervision of Pheidias, the friend of Pericles.

The Athenian Acropolis is the subject of a superbly illustrated volume written by an authority and intended for a wide public.[7] Considering the Acropolis to be the epitome of the long, eventful and too often melancholy history of Athens and Greece, the author deals with the prehistory down to the end of the Bronze Age; with the associated sagas, folk-tales and cults; the historical background; the classical buildings and their forerunners; the architectural and free-standing sculpture and other works of art; the later events and

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[5] *Periclean Athens.* By MAURICE BOWRA. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £2.50.

[6] *Armada from Athens: The Failure of the Sicilian Expedition 415-413 B.C.* By PETER GREEN. Hodder & Stoughton, £3.15.

[7] *The Acropolis.* By R. J. HOPPER. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £2.75.

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the impact of the site and its monuments on succeeding generations to the present.

The story of the three Punic Wars which culminated in the destruction of Carthage in 146 B.C. and ensured the Mediterranean supremacy of Rome, as the story now appears in the light of modern scholarship, is the theme of *Rome Against Carthage*.[8] Seen by contemporaries as prolonged struggle for control of the West Mediterranean, in retrospect it might, the authors consider, have been judged as struggle for world-empire, since the Hellenistic powers with whom Rome had yet to contend were to prove unexpectedly lightweight opponents; and they see Rome's victory over Carthage as ensuring that the dominant culture for a millennium was compounded from Roman-Hellenistic-Oriental elements.

Principal Oriental elements in later antiquity were the mystery cults of the Near East. The religion of Ancient Egypt exercised considerable general influence at this time and the worship of Isis, with her associated divinities, spread through the Roman Empire. The general reader is now provided with a detailed, enthusiastic investigation of Isiacism by an author who has acquainted himself with first-hand knowledge of the relevant sites to supplement the ancient sources.[9]

IN THE SAME SERIES[10] appears what is justifiably claimed to be the first comprehensive book in English (and possibly in any language) on an aspect of social life which played a leading part in the thought and activities of all the peoples—pagan, Jewish and Christian—who lived under Roman rule or Roman influence in republican and imperial times.[11] Professor Toynbee, sometime Laurence Professor of Classical Archaeology at Cambridge, is also widely travelled in the areas relevant to her theme. Her finely chosen plates and useful plans lend distinction to a gloomily titled but highly informative volume, written with clear and sure authority from its first chapter, which emphatically illustrates the Roman debt to Etruscan customs, and continuing throughout a well-

[8] *Rome Against Carthage*. By T. A. DOREY and D. R. DUDLEY. Secker & Warburg, £2.75.
[9] *Isis in the Graeco-Roman World*. By R. E. WITT. Thames and Hudson, £3.75.
[10] *Aspects of Greek and Roman Life*. General editor H. H. SCULLARD.
[11] *Death and Burial in the Roman World*. By J. M. C. TOYNBEE. Thames and Hudson, £3.15.

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ordered survey of Roman beliefs; cremation and inhumation; funerary rites and the cult of the dead; cemeteries, tombs, gravestones and tomb furniture.

The period of twenty years on either side of 200 B.C.—a year after the peace treaty which concluded the decisive second Punic War—is regarded by the expert author of an important book on Roman private law[12] not as transitional but decisive, one of the most remarkable in Roman history. He points out that the ravages of Hannibal's armies, especially in the south, and the prolonged absence of peasants on campaigns ruined much agricultural land, ensured Rome's dependence in the future on grain from Sicily and Africa, and brought about the drift of free citizens from the land, which was aided by the influx of wealth and slaves in the class of citizens willing and able to buy up the farms. With political power completely in the hands of the aristocracy, ruling by the strength of family groups, the law of the period had a strong aristocratic bias. After an examination of sources, there are chapters dealing with husband and wife, parent and child, guardianship, slavery, ownership, neighbours' rights and duties, security, inheritances, wills and other spheres of private law, all tending to substantiate the author's view that the law at this time was far less abstract and less conceptualised than is often supposed.

In Greece a highly novel trend toward the codification of law was in progress as early as the seventh century B.C. It started, not on the mainland, but in the Greek colonies, first of all in the western colonies, more distant and less accessible than the eastern. Perhaps colonists from different cities with different systems of customary law required a single code in the interest of uniformity. In any case the movement produced a whole series of famous law-givers, such as Zaleukos in Achaean Locris, Charondas in Ionian Catana, Diocles in Dorian Syracuse. The study of Greek law is essential for a proper understanding of the growth of city-state institutions in all their complex variety. From an anthropological standpoint, Greek law, even in the more prosperous and sophisticated communities, retained a good deal of primitive custom. In terms of political history, the developed law of Athens spells out the meaning of democracy. "When the people is master of the vote", said Aristotle, "it becomes master of the constitution." The implications in terms of legal procedure, of devolution of power to popular organs of government, are of abiding interest—not only to legal historians.[13]

A great quantity of ancient legal evidence has been preserved in the form of inscriptions, intended for public exhibition. Art historians will grant that, at certain times, especially in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., Greek inscriptional writing has the quality of fine art. The professional epigraphist can therefore sometimes gain aesthetic satisfaction in the course of his austere pursuits.

In the first[14] of two companion volumes intended for the instruction of curious layman as well as scholar, a leading expert in another austere branch of scholarship cites Mommsen's saying that the nineteenth century was the age of inscriptions, the twentieth would be the age of papyri. He also points out that, while those who require writing about everyday experience to be touched and transfigured by art regard non-literary papyri as humdrum, if not downright rubbish, the investigator who is trying to learn of things as they really were will be excited at being put in immediate touch with concrete and vivid facts that have not been interpreted by the mind or imagination of a third party. He estimates that the number of published papyrus documents in Greek and Latin from Egypt must be somewhere between 15,000 and 20,000; perhaps as many more lie in collections awaiting publication, some of them short stereotyped receipts on ostraca (2,500 such in the Bodleian Library alone), others rolls several metres long containing law codes or the tax payments of a whole village.

The second volume,[15] containing, in 70 plates, reproductions at original size of 60 Greek manuscripts written, principally on papyrus, between about 350 B.C. and A.D. 600, is now available. The reproductions generally include not so well known manuscripts, in the main of Greek literature though there is one of the Old and one of the New Testament —and a few have never previously been

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[12] *Roman Private Law Around 200 B.C.* By ALAN WATSON. Edinburgh University Press, £2.25.

[13] *The Law of Athens. Vol. 2. Procedure.* By A. R. W. HARRISON. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, £3.75. In this book the author examines the judicial procedure available for remedying wrongs against the state or the individual. The first volume, on family and property, was published in 1968. This second volume was edited, after the author's death in 1969, by D. M. MacDowell, to complete a most valuable study.

[14] *Greek Papyri: An Introduction.* By E. G. TURNER. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press (1968), £2.

[15] *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World.* By E. G. TURNER. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, £5.

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illustrated. We now have a fine book to supplement the story of the rediscovery of those ancient texts on papyrus (and the special kind of painstaking labour involved in making them available for study) which can contribute enormously to our knowledge of ancient literature, scholarship and general conditions of life. The two books amply illustrate the author's opinion that there is not one kind of palaeography which applies to literature and another which applies to documents; since at least as many papyrus texts still await an editor as have been published, the opportunities are there for those willing to take them; scholarship moves forward through the work of new generations.

There is clearly much hard work, requiring a high degree of linguistic skill, waiting to be done on the basic raw materials of scholarship accumulated over a long span of time.

Of Heroes & Excavators

By Mortimer Wheeler

THE EDITOR HAS surrounded me with a veritable Stonehenge of archaeological monoliths and has invited me to sort it out into some sort of plan and purpose. Not a little of it consists of simple solid sarsens of repetitive aspect. Differently expressed, in bulk much of it is package-archaeology for package-minds. As such it is not to be despised. *The Pleasures of Archaeology* by Karl E. Meyer[1] sums it all up: an industrious rehash "written and researched by a first-class journalist who has reported from more than forty countries for the *Washington Post*." This experienced correspondent knows (and reveals) his public and is a conscientious collector of reasonably modern information. For example, in a chapter headed "Past Improbable" he displays an agreeably judicial knowledge of the current fantasies of scientific men who once more seek to turn Stonehenge into a complicated celestial observatory or computer, with a gullibility of the kind which has sometimes strangely affected genuinely scientific minds in one way or another from Oliver Lodge downwards. Collections such as *The Pleasures* are not, of course, the vehicle for original ideas. In all the works in front of me I fail to detect any symptoms of new thinking, of the kind, for example, which Jacquetta Hawkes constantly and almost slyly injects into the vulgarising surveys and summaries with which she entertainingly varies her literary life.

In the present batch, pride of place may be given to C. W. Ceram's *Gods, Graves and Scholars* which, nearly twenty years after its first publication, now appears in a "revised and substantially enlarged edition."[2] It was a leader in this sort of writing and though, in spite of its blurb, not noticeably modernised —it still retains outworn phenomena such as "the missing link" and wears altogether a somewhat old-fashioned look—the new edition preserves the personal qualities of its prototype. The scholars loom almost as large as their scholarship; indeed the book might be described as a sober survey of archaeological discovering prior to 1950. At least it refrains from the nauseating journalistic habit of lashing itself into *excitement*, though that baneful word still occasionally rears its ugly head. Yes, Ceram is a commendable book-end for a traveller's shelf.

Its neighbour on my table is H.-P. Eydoux's *In Search of Lost Worlds*,[3] which (note that word again!) "tells the exciting story of the great archaeological discoveries" and is indeed the work of a genuinely informed enthusiast with admirable and sometimes unfamiliar illustrations. Behind them it covers predictable ground, mainly in the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East. Again, much information

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[1] *The Pleasures of Archaeology*. By KARL E. MEYER. André Deutsch, £5.25.
[2] *Gods, Graves and Scholars*. By C. W. CERAM. Victor Gollancz, £2.40.
[3] *In Search of Lost Worlds*. By HENRI-PAUL EYDOUX. Hamlyn, £2.75.

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but essentially uninspired dragoman-stuff. The author was happier in an earlier book about his native Gaul where he works at closer and more personal range. It is not unlikely that his present more general book would possess more validity in its intended French market than in the overcrowded Anglo-American scene.

From unabashed journalism or industrious collection, we turn to a compilation of narrower scope and loftier authority: to *Cities of Vesuvius* by one who has been no less than a university vice-chancellor.[4] Retired to the vineyards and many other virtues of Italy, Dr Michael Grant has produced a book on a subject which at first glance might induce the exclamation "What, again?" But the unlikely fact remains, that, amongst a miscellany of special studies and of course an infinitude of guide-books, there have been few reasonably substantive accounts of Pompeii or its fellow-victims since Mau 1899; and Grant 1971, with its admirable illustrations, at least displays the revolutionary advances of book-production in the interim. The opportunity might in all the circumstances have been taken to review with more freshness and originality the problems and relationships of Pompeiian aesthetics. The old, established categories are rehearsed, but the time has come—and this was surely an apt occasion—for some re-sorting and rethinking of old ideas; to temper wise saws with more modern instances, such as the Hellenistic and Lucanian paintings which the persevering visitor can now discover not far away at Paestum, or even those which still adorn the house of Augustus on the Palatine. Incidentally, I am half-glad (and perhaps a little sorry) that Grant consigns to a remote footnote the cross-like imprint in an upper room of the House of the Bicentenary at Herculaneum. Probably the last word on this famous attic has, however, been said by the Italian's English translation of the Italian guide to Herculaneum: "The interpretation that it would be a private Christian oratory is at present strengthened by the most serious consents, notwithstanding lively polemies and discussions."

LEAVING POMPEII under its ash and pumice and Herculaneum under its mud-lava, it is not unfitting to move southwards to the instep of Italy where once, between 720 and 510 B.C., the Achaean colony of Sybaris first took its profit and its pleasure, was then hammered by its rivals and finally smothered by an in-rush—or inrushes—of the seas, caused by a collapsing land-level. Somewhere deep beneath the surface of the great agricultural plain which now marks the region lie the remains of the lost archaic city amidst buried sand-dunes. But where? Stimulated by romantic interest, sufficiently provided with the means for financing "experiments in far-out electronics" and backed by the lively staff of the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, Orville H. Bullitt embarked upon a *Search for Sybaris*[5] during several largely frustrated years. The author makes no bones about it: "I know nothing of archaeology." His account of the operation is of the homely kind which the American reader manifestly likes. We are told about the interior arrangements of Italian Pullman cars, the vicissitudes of Calabrian road travel, the varying comforts of a small hotel, the trivial details of the daily round. It all has about it something of a nursery air, almost a touch of Beatrix Potter, which is out of context to the more single-minded Saxon and is not redeemed (once more) by constantly recurring "excitements." Did the search succeed? The tremulous reader is left in suspense until the end, when the volatile, omni-present director of the Pennsylvania Museum, who had sternly withheld premature pronouncement, at last conceded that the site of the northern part of Sybaris had in fact been identified by drilling and magnetometer readings.

> We terminate eight years of investigation with the precise location of Sybaris, and with the development of a highly successful instrument, a cesium magnetometer.

The author adds delightedly:

> The news aroused widespread interest, and inquiries and requests for further information began coming in from all over the world. I had letters and telephone calls from as far west as California. . . . In a burst of enthusiasm one history professor at a New England college wrote, "This discovery must be for this century what Troy was for the nineteenth".

Well, well! At least we have a developed cesium magnetometer.

In the next book, devoted to *Archaeology, Discoveries in the 1960s*,[6] Sybaris is politely dismissed in little more than two pages, and so takes what may fairly be regarded as its proper place in the world-picture. The author, Edward Bacon, is already well and

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[4] *Cities of Vesuvius*. By MICHAEL GRANT. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £2.95.

[5] *Search for Sybaris*. By ORVILLE H. BULLITT. Dent, £2.75.

[6] *Archaeology, Discoveries in the 1960s*. By EDWARD BACON. Cassell, £3.50.

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gratefully known as editor of the archaeological contributions which have for many years made *The Illustrated London News* a primary (and sometimes the only) source of information regarding the recent work of archaeologists on an international scale. His new book is the sequel to his *Digging for History* (1960) and, like its predecessor, serves a double purpose. It keeps the general reader in touch with the current achievement of a profession which has developed unrecognisably in size and skill and has reached vast new publics through mass-media and tourism. And not less it is, under Mr. Bacon's practical guidance, recognised as a standard source within the profession itself. The material is accessibly classified geographically, is adequately though not lavishly illustrated, and is suitably indexed. In other words, we are provided with a business-like review of a very miscellaneous field of new knowledge, though a list of relevant publications within the same period would have been a useful and not excessively bulky addition. As a selection and summary indication of the scope of the survey may be mentioned the complex and elaborately carved megaliths at Knowth in Ireland, the Roman palace at Fishbourne in Sussex, the astonishing neolithic settlement and sculptures of Lepenski Vir in the Iron Gates of Yugoslavia, the richly equipped palaeolithic burials at Sungir in Russia, the neolithic temples at Skorba on Malta, the precinct of Artemis at Brauron in Attica, the shrine with its remarkable clay images in the citadel of Mycenae, the important Minoan palaces of Kato Zakro on Crete and on the volcanic island of Santorini, the now-classic neolithic settlements at Hacilar and Çatal Hüyük in Turkey, the earlier sequences in the history of Jerusalem, the reconstruction of the famous siege of Masada besides the Dead Sea. These are mere samples of a long and sensibly narrated chronicle for which all gratitude is due to the compiler.

THE SIEGE OF MASADA, the Judaean rock-fortress just mentioned, where in A.D. 73 the First Jewish Revolt against the Romans ended in the mass-suicide of the Jewish defenders, has reached us in classical record and was recreated in the middle 1960s by Yigael Yadin's massive excavations. These are described elsewhere and are not our present concern. But a word may be offered about Yadin's literary methods. His materials are familiarly historical and he has to draw little upon the more recondite procedures of archaeological technology. Instead, he turns his splen-

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didly pictorial reports almost into conversation-pieces, in which named and characterised colleagues and employees constitute a three-dimensional drama, each playing his proper and effective role and from moment to moment contributing in substantive fashion to the build-up of the developing scene. This is a very different thing from the generally tiresome and irrelevant transatlantic domesticities to which I have already referred above. And now, among the books before us, is another Yadin masterpiece in which he reproduces the complex and almost incredibly productive operation that occupied him on the eve of Masada. *Bar-Kokhba*[7] is the day-to-day description of the exploration in 1960-1 of caves in the Dead Sea cliffs north of Masada, and the discovery there, in rocky clefts, of an amazing collection of deliberately hidden documents, textiles, and metalware. Bar-Kokhba was the relatively little-known hero of the Second Jewish Revolt, A.D. 132-5, but here he is, alive in Aramaic, Greek, or Hebrew despatches, rallying, instructing, threatening his followers in this second great national crisis. "Shimeon Bar Kosiba (Kokhba), President over Israel", he is called in one of these documents. Small wonder that when a film-slide of this was shown unannounced, 1800 years later, during a routine visit to the next President of Israel and members of his government, the immediate silence "was shattered with spontaneous cries of astonishment and joy" and "the national radio interrupted its scheduled programme to broadcast news of the discovery. . . . " Understandably it is not difficult to sense behind Yadin's vivid accounts of the two tragic episodes in Romano-Jewish history an emotional complex which nevertheless he carries off with dignity and completely scientific integrity.

Of a different world is F. H. Goodyear's *Archaeological Site Science*.[8] This is specifically an "Educational Book", claimed to be "a complete scientific handbook for the archaeologist." That it certainly is not, and it may be doubted whether the author would himself be prepared to stand by the claim made for him by the blurb. It has, for example a short chapter on water but inadequately considers the sometimes crucial diagnosis of silts. The section on radiocarbon does not begin to give an adequate picture of the highly critical problems which now surround C14 dating. Archaeomagnetism does not appear to be mentioned. Since our knowledge of the antiquity of man depends in no small measure upon potassium-argon and perhaps fission-track dating, these surely deserve an appreciably wider discussion than is allotted to them. And it may be suggested that here and there a few relevant examples would have helped to redeem the deathly aridity of the text. In any case, most of the ground is for the time being adequately covered by available literature.

BEST LAST, I conclude this mélange with Wolfgang Leppmann's *Winckelmann*,[9] "the first biography in English of the complex and fascinating man widely known as The Father of Archaeology." To the present reviewer this book is at the same time nostalgic and revealing. It carries him back to those teen-age years when Walter Pater so sensitively re-created the Renaissance mind, properly extending it far into the 18th century and thus conjoining the present and the past. In retrospect his essay on Winckelmann is the perfect picture of an intellect of sensibility amounting to genius, nurtured in poverty, frustration and unsympathetic Teutonic protestantism, and reacting in a variety of ways from all three as opportunity offered, culminating in the incautious vanity which led to his murder at the age of 51 in a Trieste hostelry. To the bitter end, even when recognised at the highest levels as a scholar and cognoscente, he failed to reach the goal of his hopes and understanding, Greece. When he was murdered in 1768 he was returning to his native Germany, and the young Goethe, one of his most fervid admirers, was eagerly waiting to greet him in person for the first time. Nevertheless, in spite of recurring failure, the mysterious acclamation of posterity has ensured his immortality, and to that acclaim Walter Pater's essay has been no mean contribution.

Now we have a new factual "life", which adds materially to our knowledge of Winckelmann's achievement in unexpected ways such as were not within Pater's field of interest. In particular, we are now told of Winckelmann's urge in and after 1758 to take part in the excavations (if such they may be called) then in progress at Herculaneum and Pompeii. His reception there by the excavators was, to say the least of it, a mixed one. Ignorant of the craft though the visitor necessarily was, he was shrewd enough to appreciate at once the

[7] *Bar-Kokhba*. By YIGAEL YADIN. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £3.70.
[8] *Archaeological Site Science*. By F. H. GOODYEAR. Heinemann, £3.
[9] *Winckelmann*. By WOLFGANG LEPPMANN. Victor Gollancz, £3.

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destructive incompetence alike of the directors and their workmen who, at Pompeii, were gangs of recently captured Barbary pirates. Splendid works of art were being obtained but the results were in no proportion to such effort as was expended, and Winckelmann angrily and widely addressed an "Open Letter on the Discoveries made at Herculaneum", followed by other protests which did nothing to ingratiate him further with the authorities concerned. But these interventions at least succeeded in inducing an international scandal which reached as far afield as Paris, the Society of Dilettanti in London, and Goethe himself at Weimar, and eventually brought useful pressures to bear. In Leppmann's words:

> In thus helping to transform a hobby into a profession, and exemplifying this process in his own person, he shaped the course of all later archaeological work.

A happy enough epitaph for a disappointed genius.

A View from the Hut

New Work in British Archaeology — By P. J. Fowler

AN ARCHAEOLOGIST today is under some considerable pressure both to get on with his work of elucidating Man in his palaeo-environment as the raw material is daily destroyed by bulldozer and plough; and to communicate. Academic publication, though it remains the prime duty, is no longer sufficient. On the one hand, the apparently ever-increasing public interest in the material remains of the past demands to be fed and stimulated and, on the other, some at least of the younger practitioners want to be in touch with the wider audience and share that quickening interest. Publishers have not been slow to recognise and indeed stimulate the sympathy between professional and layman, and one of the most obvious results is a spate of books about archaeology for archaeologists (and those who wish to become involved) and for the general reader.

Several recent publications for the serious student indicate some of the ways in which archaeology is currently developing. Like all socially-orientated growth subjects, it requires hard facts, not just for its own academic purposes but for political, planning, and conservation purposes. For this reason alone the magnificent volumes on Dorset from the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England)[1] are timely—"about time," some would doubtless say, since the first volume of the *Inventories* covering the county was published in 1952. How far, however, scholarship and topographical skill have advanced in these years the new volumes beautifully demonstrate. And though they cost a lot, they are cheap considering their contents and importance (and a good investment, as the prices of out-of-print volumes from other counties indicate). If only the Commission, and its unavoidable associate, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, could speed up its coverage we would all be much happier. Though it is gratifying to see this detailed analysis of an extraordinarily rich palimpsest of ancient and modern landscapes, one must query whether all the frills of such massive publication are really necessary in this day and age.

The Commission staff has provided detailed data about everything in one small area. Paul Ashbee[2] provides comprehensive national information about one type of site—the earthen long barrows which cover evidence of elaborate funerary practice in the 4th and 3rd millennia B.C. The result is not exactly light reading but it is an indispensable reference and source book, the outcome of

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[1] *Inventory of Historical Monuments in Dorset. Vol. II, Parts 1-3, South East Dorset.* By the ROYAL COMMISSION ON HISTORICAL MONUMENTS (ENGLAND). H.M.S.O., £16.80.

[2] *The Earthen Long Barrow in Britain.* By PAUL ASHBEE. Dent, £6.30.

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years of painstaking collection and collation of published material and of original evidence in museums and in the field.

From the museum only comes the material briefly surveyed but catalogued in some detail by Vincent Megaw. His belief is that the European art of the last millennium B.C. is not sufficiently widely appreciated. In his book,[3] which is excellently produced by a conscientious publisher, he lovingly displays the repertoire of the Celtic craftsman-artist—the metalsmith and the sculptor in stone and wood above all, ranging from the convoluted but balanced detail of decoration in part of a horse-fitting to the statuesque gloominess of more-than-lifesize human figures. Some of the material was recently seen, lifelessly displayed, on the South Bank, and that exhibition, together with the corpus in *Art of the European Iron Age*, should have gone some way to stimulating a keener awareness of our European artistic inheritance from later prehistoric times. A lot of relevant academic background to this period is discussed in a book of essays for Professor Christopher Hawkes, soon to retire from the Chair of European Archaeology at Oxford.[4] This is very much for the serious and knowledgeable student versed in the controversial niceties of proto-history approached from the archaeological viewpoint. The price would suggest the publishers do not expect a wide sale, though clearly it is essential for library shelves. The contributors, looking at Western Europe from different angles, range widely; as in many a *Festschrift*, their products vary in scope and indeed weight. The whole book smacks of the study rather than the field.

BOTH PLACES ARE, however, basic to Professor Charles Thomas' substantial exposition of the development of early Christianity in North Britain.[5] This will doubtless sound a typical academic backwater to many, but in fact the author is very much opening up a new subject here and quite consciously doing so in order to correct our present perspective of early Christianity in Britain as a whole by establishing the significance of pre- and non-Augustinian developments in the North and West. The author's fieldwork and excavations

[3] *Art of the European Iron Age.* By J. V. S. MEGAW. Adams & Dart, £8.40.
[4] *The European Community in Later Prehistory.* Edited by JOHN BOARDMAN, M. A. BROWN and T. G. E. POWELL. Routledge, £7.
[5] *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain.* By CHARLES THOMAS. Oxford University Press, £3.

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in south-west Scotland provide much of the new evidence on which his clear-cut story is based, allied here to a vivid discussion of the relatively well-known documentary and epigraphic sources. Add to this that the book is exceptionally well-written and its claims to be regarded as a major contribution to early British history cannot be ignored. One can only hope that historians will read it, and with an appreciation of the archaeological evidence which forms such a vital part of the story.

Archaeological evidence also demands appreciation in another original "classic" dealing with an historic period. The two editors of *Deserted Medieval Villages,*[6] Professor Beresford and John Hurst, are respectively economic historian and archaeologist, both with a sympathetic awareness of the dos and don'ts of each other's primary evidence. The book is basically a catalogue and review of all the archaeological work on deserted medieval villages since Beresford's *Lost Villages of England* was first published in 1954. The results are now impressive and unavoidable. The sheer number of sites (*c.*2000) is something of an eye-opener for those prepared to disregard the contemporary accounts of 16th-century depopulation, even though the almost omnipresent nibbling Tudor sheep was by no means the only cause of settlement desertion. And the accumulating evidence of, for example, changing settlement morphology and of early planning in our "natural" village layouts contains food for thought for many writers from historical geographer (arguing back to Saxon village shape from Tithe Map delineation) to, at the other extreme, the romantic traveller (gushing over immemorial High Streets lined by ancient houses sleeping in the drowsy warmth of a summer's afternoon). Our villages, to judge from those that have died, have been in fact lively organic things, changing shape, place and even function like spritely amoebae on the landscape. And they still are; for both growth and desertion are still active in their fabric.

The book covers the whole of the United Kingdom, summarises all sites where any sort of excavation has taken place, surveys in particular the surprisingly large body of evidence that now exists for medieval "peasant" houses, and gives a county-by-county list of all known sites, whether yet located or not. And finally, it positively encourages the reader to go out and look for

[6] *Deserted Medieval Villages.* Edited by MAURICE BERESFORD and J. G. HURST. Lutterworth, £8.

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himself by giving specific directions of what to look for and how to make a simple record. For further information is urgently wanted, not only for leisurely academic purposes but also because each year 30 or so such sites are "lost" once again, but this time irretrievably, as our expanding social demands on our inherited landscape become increasingly destructive. This point is nowhere emphasised so well as by deserted medieval settlements. Owing to the dedication, perseverance, and scholarship of these two editors in particular, there is now a well-documented case of the destruction of this aspect of our archaeological heritage. This is a most important book, archaeologically, historically and, in a sense, politically.

Archaeological destruction is not, however, confined to the countryside. If anything it is worse in towns because there it is so concentrated and, usually, so obviously commercially-inspired. What can be rescued in such circumstances, given local leadership and a sympathetic local authority, is illustrated by a recent volume from Chichester reporting on excavations in the town 1963-69.[7] This, again, is an archaeologist's book, the formal academic record of structures, stratigraphy, and finds, with some brief appraisal of what it all means in terms of the town's history and of the town's significance in a wider context. The local interests are to be congratulated not only on doing the work but also on seeing it into print and at a reasonable price. If it can now be followed up by further reports and a more popular presentation, Chichester will be doing itself and its archaeology proud in the interests of us all.

"RESCUE ARCHAEOLOGY" is currently of much concern in archaeological circles. A quite different development, though not entirely unrelated, is the increasing application of scientific techniques to the study of our past. Four short books just published make the point. Two are from the Council for British Archaeology: a general handbook summarising the whole field of scientific aids in archaeology, which will be particularly useful to those beginning to feel their way in an increasingly complex field of study; and an indispensable handlist giving all the Carbon-14 "dates" published up to December, 1970, on material from British archaeological sites.[8] The fact that there are now several hundred such "dates", whether or not one "believes" them and whatever further recalibrations the scientists still have in store for us, means that this mass of evidence must be taken very seriously into account in any syntheses of current knowledge. This publication comes then most opportunely, not least since the "dates" have been mostly published in various journals not everywhere readily available, and provision has been made for updating it at appropriate intervals. The dread of reducing archaeology to a table of dates which must be memorised like "O" Level History is mitigated by the warning on the back of every page that "error terms (equivalent to ± 1 standard deviation) do not define a bracket within which the true date must fall."

Many of the C-14 assays have been made on bone, and *The Study of Bones from Archaeological Sites*[9] is the subject of the first in a series devoted to science in archaeology. Bones are what the public often immediately associates with archaeology. Yet, human bones apart, they have all too often been neglected as a source of information about economy, diet, and animal history. During the last few years important developments in this field have been taking place, stimulated in part by the fresh thinking of the author of the book. Now that he has added an exposition of his techniques to the very few books available on this subject, it is to be hoped not only that excavators will have a greater awareness of what is often the commonest "find" on their sites but also that others will be encouraged to take up a rewarding subject—and, with help, most people can start to work on bones.

Another very useful little book on a "do-it-yourself" aspect of archaeology has been produced by Miss Dowman.[10] Her very practical guide is designed to help people on excavation and, afterwards, in carrying out simple conservation treatment of the ordinary sorts of material which most excavations can be expected to produce. Even for a non-technician like myself, most of it is understandable and, perhaps, more importantly, the principles of elementary conservation are clearly visible behind the technical details described. I imagine this book will be on the shelf of every excavator's hut.

Many people already help each year on

[7] *Chichester Excavations, Vol. I.* By A. DOWN and M. RULE. Chichester Civic Society, £2.50.

[8] *Handbook of Scientific Aids and Evidence for Archaeologists. Archaeological Site Index to Radio-Carbon Dates for Great Britain and Ireland.* Council for British Archaeology, 50p and 65p.

[9] *The Study of Bones from Archaeological Sites.* By RAYMOND E. CHAPLIN. Seminar Press, £2.

[10] *Conservation in Field Archaeology.* By ELIZABETH A. DOWMAN. Methuen, £1.50.

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archaeological excavations and several books exist to introduce them to the various techniques employed. Dr Alexander has now bravely tried to write a book for the "pros", for those who actually direct the complex process of an excavation.[11] The book contains a lot of good sense and common sense, but it was probably an impossible one to write successfully. The trouble is that every site is unique and it is therefore dangerous to generalise. Nevertheless, it cannot but be useful to those aiming for a career in archaeology, and anything insisting on the highest standards is praiseworthy. As an exposé of what is expected of a director in the field, it should open readers' eyes to what is involved; but as a practical guide when actually faced by a site in the raw, I cannot see it helping Dr Alexander's colleagues very much —and I write this with the book beside me and an active excavation proceeding just outside the window of my hut.

ALL THE BOOKS so far mentioned are really for the specialist, not necessarily just the professor of archaeology in his study or even the honours student, but also the "ordinary" man or woman actively involved in archaeology—and these last number many thousands in Britain with its well-established tradition of "amateur" archaeology. It is perhaps not widely appreciated that the bulk of field-work and excavation in Britain each year is carried out, not by the very few professionals employed by state, museum and university, but by part-timers working in their leisure. Presumably this wide and lively public involvement in an academic subject is in part what encourages publishers to invest in popular archaeological books. "Popular", however, covers a multitude of sins and a recent sample of publications avowedly aimed at the wider market illustrates the range.

Professor Barry Cunliffe has with remarkable speed done what many of us would like to emulate: produced more or less simultaneously both the formal academic report and a popular book on a major site and its excavation. Staggeringly enough, he has done this twice, with Roman Bath and the Roman "palace" at Fishbourne as his subjects. *Roman Bath Discovered* and *Fishbourne*,[12] both plentifully and pertinently illustrated,

[11] *The Directing of Archaeological Excavations.* By JOHN ALEXANDER. John Baker, £4.50.

[12] *Roman Bath Discovered.* By BARRY CUNLIFFE. Routledge, £5.25. *Fishbourne: A Roman Palace and its Garden.* By BARRY CUNLIFFE. Thames and Hudson, £2.10.

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23 *September.* £3·80

Batsford

represent the best sort of popularisation: authoritative and first-hand, written with enjoyment and meant to be read or browsed through with pleasure, informative and up-to-date, and related to visible sites and museum material. If we could all write like this, and as quickly, the journalistic parasites picking their way through the archaeological jungle would soon expire.

Not quite so happy is another popularising effort by an academic archaeologist. Derek Roe's *Prehistory*,[13] which should be the antecedent to *Roman Bath* and *Fishbourne*, is competent but dull. It does not convey the intellectual stimulation and excitement of working in prehistoric archaeology, and it also omits fairly important areas of study. Perhaps this was inevitable in selecting the material to fit the prescribed length of book, but the contents should not be taken as necessarily representing current thought. On the other hand, it is clear from internal evidence that the book was at least two years in the press, so a lot can be blamed on the publishers. Certainly the book does not live up to the publishers' rather pretentious claims, and I can think of several other better books as an introduction for the beginner enquiring "What is prehistory?"

CHARLES THOMAS has also produced a popular book, covering the ground already indicated above but expanding his theme to cover all of western Britain including Ireland in the period A.D. 400-800.[14] He wears his erudition lightly here, yet has crammed a great deal of current thought and recent work into 125 pages. His first map clearly makes one of his main points: that in these seminal centuries, movements of people from North to South and from West to East within the British Isles were as significant, and probably as numerically important, as the much better-publicised East-West movements of Angles, Saxons and Jutes. Ten years ago, this book could hardly have been written, certainly not with either the general theses or the detail now emerging from the varied research on this period. As a racy, up-to-date introductory survey of the early history of Western Britain during four crucial and fascinating centuries too dominated in our consciousness by Teutonic bias, Professor Thomas' book is thoroughly recommended to student and general reader.

[13] *Prehistory: an Introduction.* By DEREK ROE. Macmillan, £2.50.
[14] *Britain and Ireland in Early Christian Times, A.D. 400-800.* By CHARLES THOMAS. Thames and Hudson, £1.75.

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The same centuries are also included in the one foreign book in this collection, again a general survey by an archaeological academic.[15] The point about date must be emphasised because Danish Prehistoric Monuments do not stop at 43 A.D. Prehistory in Scandinavia enviably continues to the introduction of Christianity untrammelled, unlike our British archaeology, by the interruption of a Roman period; it therefore includes the Vikings, and so covers the sites and material of 11,000 of the last 12,000 years or so. The book can of course be used for armchair archaeology but it is clearly meant to be used by the archaeological visitor—the last chapter is called "How to Find the Prehistoric Monuments" and an Appendix lists the more visible and accessible sites. Used in conjunction with the excellent Geographical Institute 1:100,000 maps, which mark antiquities in colour, this book will enable both the archaeological traveller and the casual tourist to see what they wish, adequately prepared by a well-translated academic background. Intending readers/travellers are strongly advised to use this rather than a similar book from the same publisher earlier this year. The only trouble is the £6 price—but just think of the petrol and time you will save, so regard it as an investment.

Finally, back to base with yet two more books about London, that widow's cruse of writers. Both books share an interest in Charles Thomas' Early Christian period but there similarities stop. Timothy Baker writes authoritatively about *Medieval London*,[16] briefly starting the story in the immediately post-Roman centuries but very much more interested from the Normans onwards. He leaves us with Tudor London, but on the way he has described what can still be traced in modern London of the intervening centuries as well as telling the story of the growth of England's capital and its institutions—as a non-Londoner, I found the whole informative and well-written. It is unfair to the author to mention in the same paragraph *The London that was Rome*,[17] a pretentious compilation of pseudo-scholarship. I do so only in the hope that people will not be taken in by its inflated self-importance, its claims for inventing a spurious "New Archaeology". In fact, it is a good example in a well-known genre of archaeological writing: the lunatic fringe. People with nothing better to do will always write it. The serious matter is that a respectable publisher should put a book like this on the market. It can only mislead that wider audience which, basically, has allowed all the books mentioned here and which archaeology itself exists to serve.

[15] *Danish Prehistoric Monuments.* By P. V. GLOB. Faber & Faber, £6.
[16] *Medieval London.* By TIMOTHY BAKER. Cassell, £2.75.
[17] *The London that was Rome.* By MICHAEL HARRISON. Allen and Unwin, £3.75.

Against Oblivion

Monuments of Byzantium—By ANTHONY BRYER

"TIME IN ITS irresistible and ceaseless flow carries along on its flood all created things, and drowns them in the depths of obscurity. . . . But the tale of history forms a very strong bulwark against the stream of time, and to some extent checks its irresistible flow, and of all things done in it, as many as history has taken over, it secures and binds together, and does not allow them to slip away into the abyss of oblivion."

So Anna Comnena in her conventional *proem* to *The Alexiad*. Whatever the risks of early Christian and, especially, Byzantine history languishing in the abyss of oblivion in the past, it is the present flow of books—introductions, syntheses, surveys—which seems irresistible now. The dozen under review, published in the last few months, could easily be doubled. How different the situation even a few years ago. The first modern introduction to Byzantium, Norman Baynes' *The Byzantine Empire*, was announced in 1914 and published

ANTHONY BRYER *is Acting Director of Byzantine Studies at the University of Birmingham, formerly Research Fellow, Athens University, British Council Specialist Lecturer in Greece and Turkey and Visiting Fellow, Dumbarton Oaks, Harvard University, and has written and broadcast on Byzantine history and art. His Oxford doctoral thesis has been developed into books on the monuments and society of the Greeks of the Pontus, to be published shortly.*

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in 1925. It is a modest affair, full of characteristic sound sense and devoid of illustrations. Eagerly awaited, it served more than a generation. The present dozen are mostly large, mostly heavily illustrated—and mostly expensive. They presumably express a public, or perhaps publishers' demand. But general works outstrip present knowledge and research, a curious, even disturbing, situation in a field in which much basic information is often simply not available. But encouragement must be found in these brave new tomes. Some illustrate the famous miniatures of the Madrid Skylitzes, but what about the unedited text of the manuscript? St Gregory Palamas has at last come into vogue, but most of his works are unpublished. No Byzantine centre, in Washington, Paris, Vienna or Munich has yet undertaken prosopography as a corporate project; most Byzantine seals have yet to be published; the workings of the Byzantine economy, despite notable recent work, remain mysterious or disputed over long periods and immeasurably more is to come from the early Ottoman archives and from those of Venice and Genoa. There is no corpus of Byzantine inscriptions and only recently has there been any major attempt (in Professor Haspels' survey of highland Phrygia) to continue Ramsay's great work of physical description of Anatolia. In Syria the ruins of late Roman and early Byzantine towns, whose very identification is in dispute, stand stranded along the Euphrates. A public which, catching a glimpse of the golden domes of Byzantium, asks for more, is growing, but the workers in the outback remain few.

The balance between demand and what can be offered is happier in the late Roman world. Professor Grant's book[1] on the early church to 337 is an admirably dispassionate and detailed exposition, placed primarily and properly in its Roman administrative context. The volatile changes of outlook and organisation in the early church, from Paul onward, and its near-miraculous success against odds largely of its own creation (the embarrassing postponement of the Day of Judgment, the trials of becoming respectable) are only in part explainable by the near-consistent tolerance of the authorities. The tolerance was born of an increasingly syncretistic outlook, local accommodations and, later, the fact that even during much of "the reign of Diocletian [the empire] was actually too weak to be able to indulge in persecution."

> Persecutions failed in large measure because they seemed unjust not only to Christians but to leaders of the Roman world. . . . It may be claimed that the church came to terms with the world. As it did so, however, the world finally came to terms with the church.

After his *Marcus Aurelius,* Dr Anthony Birley has a plum of a biography in Septimius Severus[2]—if an occasionally sour fruit, for he does not deny some of the emperor's more grisly traits. But he can stage Apuleius' trial for sorcery at Sabratha among "Scenes from provincial life", there is Julia Domna and Commodus' last months—which he renamed after his own nomenclature, expanded to make up the dozen: Amazonius, Invictus, Pius, Felix, Lucius, Aelius, Aurelius, Commodus, Augustus, Hercules, Romanus, Exsuperatorius. And there are the places with which the African emperor (the U.S. Congress debated his racial origins in 1963) was associated—the huge monuments of Lepcis in the blazing Libyan sun and Dr Birley's own Carpow, appropriately illustrated in thick Scottish mist. Dr Birley's biography is scholarly and credible. Equally readable, if a trifle more demotic, is Mr Holland Smith's life of Constantine the Great.[3] It carries less assurance (there are some questionable emphases) and is somewhat overwhelmed by its sources, but faces the long-discussed enigmas of the emperor's character and career squarely enough.

MR PETER BROWN'S BOOK on the world of late antiquity[4] is a joy. Its surface sparkles with significant and ingenious detail. He explains that it "cannot be merely a history of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire"; indeed, in his conception, there is hardly either, but simply change, fertile at almost every stage. He has an eye for apparently significant indications of change—dress, diet and so on. The detail is brilliant in the best Oxfordish style—it is a very stylish book—but there are times when one wonders if an argument is not erected for a long-hoarded example, striking quotation or surprising comparison; to stop and question sometimes brings disillusion or even disbelief. A notable quality is the illustrations, more carefully controlled than any in these books, their captions always provoking. Mr Brown is particularly good on the impulses and role of the holy man:

[1] *Augustus to Constantine. The Thrust of the Christian Movement into the Roman World.* By ROBERT M. GRANT. Collins, £3.15.

[2] *Septimius Severus. The African Emperor.* By ANTHONY BIRLEY. Eyre & Spottiswoode, £5.50.

[3] *Constantine the Great.* By JOHN HOLLAND SMITH. Hamish Hamilton, £3.

[4] *The World of Late Antiquity. From Marcus Aurelius to Muhammad.* By PETER BROWN. Thames and Hudson, Library of European Civilisation, £2.

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> Late Roman Egypt was a land of vigorous villages where tensions sprang quite as much from the disruptive effects of new wealth and new opportunities as from the immemorial depredations of the tax-collector. Egyptian and Syrian villages came to produce more well-to-do eccentrics, whose talents found no outlet in the prudent and rooted routines of successful peasant communities: Anthony was an educational misfit; Macarius had been a smuggler; Pachomius had been uprooted by military service....
>
> The later Roman empire was not a world of great dislocation and oppression, so much as of unremitting thoroughness.... When a holy man died, his life would be remembered in the locality as a fragile patch of sunshine breaking the harsh climate of normal life....

There are, infuriatingly, no references to the stream of detail. But Mr Brown's book will delight a generation of undergraduates and others.

Dr Birley emphasises how limited was the capacity of a ruler such as Septimius actually to influence events and people; by the sixth century, Professor Robert Browning, in his joint biography of Justinian and Theodora,[5] maintains, "men rose and fell at the whim of the ruler"; maybe a change of definition of the powers of the now Christian autocrat, maybe historical convention. Professor Browning's is a lucidly arranged and surprisingly conventional book which, basically (and unlike Mr Brown's), agrees with the classic and plausible criticism of Justinian's aims put forward by Procopius. He follows long-established views on the foundation of Constantinople and the role of the demes. The book is admittedly not exhaustive; for that we must go to Vasiliev on Justin I (in effect the first stage of Justinian's reign) and to Professor Rubin's near-impenetrable study of Justinian, when it is completely published. But it covers everything with good sense and insight, from the scrappy basilicas huddled within the great Severan buildings of Africa (here the shallowness of the reconquest might have been discussed) to the rocky fortress of Petra, rising above the dripping tea plantations of Soviet Adjaristan, which for decades plugged the Persian outlet to the Black Sea. The illustrations are lavish (with one or two strange captions) and the reader is given moments of revelation: the muddy close-knit villages outside modern Skopje and just over the nearby Bulgarian border which, for generations, held a monopoly of supplying half the generalship of the empire and most of its imperial family; a vivid description of the street people in Constantinople; the mem-

[5] *Justinian and Theodora.* By ROBERT BROWNING. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £4.

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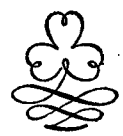

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ory of Belisarius, not his master, surviving in popular Greek imagination; and the role of Sittas, who insisted that the Armenian leaders of the east be given due recognition:

> Indeed it was Sittas who began the Armenian diaspora. Without his insight into the character of their society, the Armenians would perhaps have remained confined to their upland valleys, as are the Svanetians to this day, and would not have played their conspicuous role in the life of Byzantium, of the Ottoman empire, and of the world at large.

Sittas, one of Justinian's generals, is not honoured in Professor Lang's book on Armenia.[6] This is a curious work. It runs from Semiramis, and earlier, to Mikoyan and includes reports on all branches of Armenian activity, like a proud headmaster summarising the school's work on speech day: "Ladies and gentlemen, Rome has erected a statue to our rhetor Haykazn; Mergelian has been elected a Corresponding Member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences at the age of twenty-six [polite applause]; and Stalin claims that the corrupting influence of *The Green Hat* by Michael Arlen (alias, of course, Kouyoumdjian) has led to the suicide of his second wife." The occasionally inconsequential narrative, the sometimes eccentrically-chosen illustrations and the high claims made for Armenia as "cradle of civilization" fleetingly give the book the air of an uncritical official handbook. Professor Lang, who is primarily and notably a Georgian scholar, has however been able quietly to suppress some wider Armenian claims, especially in the field of architecture. He is, perhaps, best on the prehistory of Urartu and always efficiently summarises much valuable and inaccessible information. There are inevitable gaps in a work of this scope (such as the Crimean and other settlements of the Armenian diaspora), but this is a welcome report. But why is there no reliable and comprehensive history of Armenia in a European language? There are stirrings, both in the West (with the revival of the *Revue des Etudes Arméniennes* in 1964) and in the Matenandaran, so perhaps there is hope yet.

THE SLAVS have been much better served for the Western reader. In the first of the current books Professor Gimbutas[7] presents their prehistory and history over some sticky passages from their origins (perhaps in the western Ukraine) in the second millennium B.C. to the Moravian missions. It is largely an archaeological and linguistic study in the familiar *Ancient Peoples and Places* format, condensed and therefore didactic, full of the Chernjakhovo complex, the Saltovo culture, the structure of the communal *zadruga* and suchlike matters.

Dr Vlasto's work on the entry of the Slavs thereafter into Christendom is a solid study.[8] The subject is particularly difficult to present to the general reader for whom it seems intended; the sources, lurking beneath a burden of modern scholarship and interpretation in many languages, tend to come to pieces in the hand when eventually extracted. Dr Vlasto is properly cautious: "The reader must always bear in mind that many passages are little better than construction laced with surmise. The few books in English which treat this period of Slav history often impart a spurious air of precision." There are a score of published explanations of the origins of the glagolitic alphabet, mostly rum and all ingenious; the only (but not entire) agreement seems to be that it should more

[6] *Armenia: Cradle of Civilization.* By DAVID MARSHALL LANG. George Allen & Unwin, £6.30.
[7] *The Slavs.* By MARIJA GIMBUTAS. Thames and Hudson, Ancient Peoples and Places, £3·50.
[8] *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom. An Introduction to the Medieval History of the Slavs.* By A. P. VLASTO. Cambridge University Press, £6.

Studies in Archaeological Sciences No. 1
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appropriately be called Cyrillic. Dr Vlasto prudently shies at such traps but at crucial points, such as before describing the mission of Cyril and Methodius, stops to list and characterise the sources; there are over one hundred pages of efficient notes and bibliography. Except for an occasional shakiness in dealing with Byzantine matters, especially in the twelfth century, Dr Vlasto's account rings sound and clear. But it assumes a certain rigidity, for example in dealing with the Moravian mission itself, which makes one wonder if it is in fact necessary to seek and argue consistencies in what was an unprecedented and fluid situation, so soon swept away with Moravia itself.

THE STRUCTURE OF the book, its geographical, rather than chronological, compartments, is also perhaps over-rigid. But it is going to be useful, especially for reliable reference in the quicksands of Slav historiography. It is not to belittle it to say that much of its usefulness and even balance is derived from the accumulated work of Mgr Francis Dvornik. It is now a third of a century since Mgr Dvornik entered his first chair at Prague and seven years since he retired from his last at Dumbarton Oaks, but here is what will certainly not be his last word on the subject from the master himself. The quality of Mgr Dvornik's scholarship springs from his deep and non-partisan understanding of both the medieval Slav and Greek cultures. Inevitably his latest book,[9] on Byzantine missions among the Slavs, is in large part a synthesis of his earlier work, but he was moved to write it by the notable recent archaeological discoveries in Moravia and the Balkans—the ten churches of Mikulčice and a scattering elsewhere down to Montenegro. They raise their own problems, some of which are also dealt with by Dr Vlasto. A few of these tiny stone mission chapels antedate the arrival of Cyril and Methodius by up to sixty years. Mgr Dvornik is sceptical of the notion that their elementary architecture can be linked with that of the errant Irish-Scottish missionaries and points to more solid and plausible parallels in Latin Dalmatia. He argues that the evangelists there contributed heavily to the earlier conversion of the Croats and later of the Serbs. Mgr Dvornik re-examines other matters in the light of recent scholarship: the literary activities of Cyril and Methodius, Cyril's relationship with Photius and the vexed question of the Photian

[9] *Byzantine Missions among the Slavs. SS Constantine-Cyril and Methodius.* By FRANCIS DVORNIK. Rutgers University Press, Byzantine Series, $17.50, £8.14.

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embassy to Samarra (dated, *contra* Mme Ahrweiler, to 855-6).

Curiously, the apostles of the Slavs get no mention in the expanded version of the six Byzantine historical talks given on the BBC in 1968, now edited by Dr Philip Whitting,[10] to whose enthusiasm the gathering of a number of speakers (including three Koraës professors) was due. Dr Whitting has added a helpful chapter on art and architecture, tables, illustrations and six pull-out maps from Ostrogorsky. He has set his sights on producing a reliable introduction for the general public and the book is certainly good value for money. It is a sort of historical relay race. Professor Romilly Jenkins' lap on the period 842-c.1050 (counted, alas, now as his fifty-second and last article) is published two years after his death. It is authentic Jenkins, finding him in a mellow but characteristically forthright mood. He explores middle-Byzantine military theory, practice, equipment and the training of an officer class as a key to the successes of the "Age of Conquest", using such sources as the *De Velitatione Bellica:*

> The author of *Skirmishing Warfare* knows his job at first hand. He enters in detail into such questions as the posting, provisioning and relief of forward troops, with all the emphasis on training and discipline and meticulous attention to detail that we should expect from the best type of army officer.

Jenkins, whose collected articles are being republished by Variorum Reprints, was not the first, or perhaps the last, great Byzantinist brought up in the classical tradition for whom ever deeper acquaintance with that infinitely remote world brought a kind of revulsion. It is a phenomenon which might repay investigation. In Jenkins' case it was spurred by an irritation with over-stated modern Greek claims of absolute continuity, cultural and ethnic, from Pericles to Papadopoulos in which Byzantium provides an essential, but awkward, link. Jenkins himself diagnosed an equally over-stated distinction between "truth" and "Ethnic Truth" as being part of the explanation. As every Greek schoolboy knows, he is heir to Themistocles and therefore to Alexander of Macedon, Basil I and Kolokotronis. The trouble is that it is all too easy to say that the last three were not Greek; indeed Jenkins himself was contemplating a book on the Greek Revolution of 1821 in terms of an internecine struggle between Albanians.

Professor Apostolos Vacalopoulos has long presented the most serious arguments against Jenkins' strictures. He also is an honest and zealous seeker after truth, ethnic and otherwise. He is sometimes uncritical of his sources (such as in his persistent argument for the Greek origins of the Vlachs which is apparently based, in the face of all other evidence, on a nineteenth-century opinion), but he has a rare concern for non-Greek, especially Turkish, material. Volume 1 of his *History of Neo-Hellenism,* originally published in Greek in 1961 and now a local classic, has been translated as *Origins of the Greek Nation, 1204-1461.*[11] The theme, briefly, is that after the catastrophe of 1204 the Byzantine "Romans" revived their national consciousness as Greeks, or more specifically as "Hellenes", laying the essential foundations for modern Hellenic nationalism. It is to some extent a fair argument, for in fact Byzantium had so retracted that the majority of its inhabitants were, probably for the first time, Greek—that is to say Greek-speaking and Greek Orthodox, which was a more than adequate definition for the

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[10] *Byzantium. An Introduction.* Edited by PHILIP WHITTING. Basil Blackwell, by arrangement with the British Broadcasting Corporation, £2.

[11] *Origins of the Greek Nation. The Byzantine Period, 1204-1461.* By APOSTOLOS E. VACALOPOULOS, translated by IAN MOLES, revised by the author. Rutgers University Press, Byzantine Series, $20, £9.30.

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Ottomans. But Professor Vacalopoulos is more rigorous than any Ottoman official, requiring evidence of ethnic background and national consciousness. He is asking more of his probable medieval ancestors than any nineteenth-century Western nationalist could demand of his. The nevertheless often convincing answers he receives may be a major concern to a Greek readership, but the Western historian, perhaps more interested in the social upheavals of fourteenth-century Byzantium (on which there is hardly a word) may find the pursuit of neo-Hellenism something of a red herring. But it does lead to a scholarly restatement of a number of cherished modern Greek beliefs, such as the very early origin of the crypto-Christians and the wide Ottoman inheritance of Byzantine institutions, for which we may have to wait for Professor Speros Vryonis' forthcoming study for a real answer.

That there is a formidable continuity of language and, to varying extents, culture, from classical times provides one of the fascinations of Byzantium, and that the origins of modern Greek "Hellenism" can be sought in the dying empire is at least arguable. But a book based upon the last thesis alone does not make for history. It offers a series of vignettes, some excellent. For example the description of the fall of Trebizond in 1461, although bristling with misunderstandings and omissions, is probably the fullest yet made. Professor Vacalopoulos rightly sets great store by maps. Those of Greece are helpful; those of Anatolia, apparently based on Babinger, repeat and introduce errors. This is an attractive and impressive re-statement of modern Greek historiography, more soundly based than any before, but its premises may surprise the Western reader.

FINALLY THERE IS an English version of Professor Haussig's large book on Byzantine civilisation,[12] made by Professor Hussey, to whom all English-reading students have long been indebted for her translations of Professor Ostrogorsky's classic history of the Byzantine state. A companion volume to Ostrogorsky of this nature has long been needed. This book will take a long time to digest, but it seems clear that Haussig cannot be used in the same way as Ostrogorsky. It is helpful on literature, especially in the long neglected field of popular writing, and its concern for the economic background at all stages is admirable, but it is lacking in the field of architecture and is, despite the annotations to the 169 illustrations, very sketchy and uncertain on art. Partly the book's use is hampered by the fact that it is, basically, over twelve years old, partly because it is too wordy, too repetitive and too ambitious. Its framework is a sort of plodding determinism. The principal drawback is persistent over-statement, to the extent of drowning good points or even an acceptable truth. It has no references. Perhaps the book will stand up to use, and certainly a compendium which goes beyond Koukoules or Bréhier is essential, but one suspects that the standard works on most of its component topics (which are sometimes omitted in the three-page bibliography) will stand longer. Maybe Norman Baynes' little introduction, written half a century ago, is still in print. . . .

[12] *A History of Byzantine Civilization.* By H. W. HAUSSIG, translated by J. M. HUSSEY. Thames and Hudson, £6.30.

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POINTS OF THE COMPASS

An American Profile

The Black Student Militant (ii)

By Martin Kilson

Black Studies

THE BLACK STUDIES MOVEMENT, which commenced in 1968 after the murder of Martin Luther King, lacks perspective. Like the founders of other currently fashionable movements, the advocates of the Black Studies movement are either ignorant of or indifferent to their precursors. Yet they definitely stand on the shoulders of other men —men of great intellectual calibre and humanistic sensitivity. But then, ignorance of one's antecedents can be serviceable: it lends fashionable movements like the Black Studies movement a blissful momentum.

An appreciation of one's antecedents, however, has value too: it places constraints on and gives perspective to one's desire to advance beyond them. The Negro pioneers of the systematic study of the Negro in American history and life were often scholars of the first rank, and much can be learned from them.[1]

Apart from being skilled practitioners of their scholarly disciplines, these Negro pioneers in Afro-American studies had that special quality of self-detachment which Kelley Miller, a Negro sociologist at Howard University in the 1920s, attributed to the late Professor Carter G. Woodson, the leading black American historian in the first half of this century. As Miller put it:

> The largest measure of our academic admiration is due to the Negro who can divest himself of momentary passion and prejudice, and with self-detachment devote his powers to searching out and sifting the historical facts growing out of race relationship. . . .

No doubt Professor Miller's statement of the proper relationship between a scholar's prejudices and his scholarship is a bit stark. In practice, self-detachment in the scholarly process is difficult and is seldom realised fully. Yet, as Kelley Miller knew well, anyone who pretends to be a scholar must recognise that self-detachment is a quality perpetually to be striven for; and though no scholar or intellectual of flesh-and-blood ever achieves it fully, it is precisely the awareness that facilitates the subordination of prejudices to the scholarly frame of mind.

But a basic feature of the Black Studies movement is the disregard of those special habits and norms that govern scholarly activity. The militant advocates of Black Studies prefer instead the explicit politicisation of organisation and teaching of Afro-American studies in colleges and universities. At one extreme are those who favour all-black control of Afro-American studies programmes and participation solely by Negro students. Others are less extreme on the issue of racial composition of Black Studies programmes, but would reserve the right to define the conditions of white participation and would police such participation to ensure white conformity to the Black Nationalist outlook. But such racialist organisation and isolation of Black Studies programmes can only truncate them as scholarly enterprises. The presumed psychological security to be derived from such programmes will be short-lived.

[1] Any listing of the Negro pioneers of Afro-American studies would surely include the following: Carter G. Woodson, a Harvard-trained historian and a founder of the pioneering Association for the Study of Negro Life and History and of its invaluable organ, *The Journal of Negro History* (1916 to present); Horace Mann Bond, a Chicago-trained sociologist and educator whose *Education of the Negro in Alabama—A Study in Cotton and Steel* (1937) is a classic in the sociology of education; Rayford Logan, a Harvard-trained historian who succeeded Professor Woodson as editor of *The Journal of Negro History* and whose *The Negro in American Life and Thought—The Nadir 1877-1901* (1954) is a unique contribution to the intellectual history of American racism; Allison Davis, a Harvard- and Chicago-trained social psychologist whose *Deep South* (1941) is a classic in the sociology of race; W. E. B. DuBois, a Harvard-trained historian and sociologist whose *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899) was a pioneering work in urban sociology; St. Clair Drake, a Chicago-trained anthropologist, whose *Black Metropolis* (1945) is a classic description of a Negro ghetto; and John Hope Franklin, a Harvard-trained historian whose *The Militant South* (1956) is a major contribution to the study of the extremist ethos in Southern culture.

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Negroes can master the best skills, tools, and habits in the humanities and social sciences only through unfettered interaction with white colleagues.

THE GENERAL SOURCES of the Black Studies movement, familiar to any self-critical American, are those relating to the influence of white racism in the scholarly treatment of Negroes in American history and society. Any black worth his salt resents such treatment of himself and his ancestors. As educational skills became available to Negroes the racist portrayal of the Negro was attacked and redressed. The specific sources of the Black Studies movement are those relating to special variants of the overall endeavour of Negroes to redress the position of white racism in the portrayal of the Negro. One such variant of this endeavour is associated with an intense feeling of alienation from white culture and institutions. Marcus Garvey's movement, the Universal Negro Improvement Association, originated this mode of attack by Negroes on the influence of white racism in portraying Negro history. Rather than claiming parity for Negroes in the historical record, Garvey claimed Negro superiority. It was Garvey who popularised ideas now expressed by the phrase *"black is beautiful"*, and he pioneered the glorification of the Negro past, now a goal of many advocates of the Black Studies movement.

Although Black Studies are a direct descendant of earlier movements like the Garvey movement, it has certain unique features. For one thing, it has greater visibility, afforded it by white college campuses which are the main arena of action. The Garvey Movement of the 1920s had only Negro institutions as its arena, which was also true of the "New Negro Movement" which was an organised effort of middle-class Negro intellectuals in the 1920s to redress white racist appraisals of the Negro. Thus, the Black Studies movement appears caught in a contradiction: it is seemingly motivated by an intense sense of alienation from white culture and institutions but chooses white colleges and universities as its main area of activity.

This apparent contradiction in the Black Studies movement has not escaped criticism from certain supporters of the movement. One critic, Professor Vincent Harding of Spelman College—a Negro college—has called for a lessening of activity on behalf of Black studies on white campuses in order to allow its more effective growth in Negro colleges. This criticism has, I think, a point but not a very sharp one: it smacks of rearguard action. Most Negroes attending college are increasingly on white campuses (perhaps 70%) and this trend will increase rather than diminish. Furthermore, the brightest Negro students are attracted to white campuses both within and outside the South; and despite forms of severe alienation and normlessness in relation to white institutions exhibited by many black youths, they recognise that a technically superior education is more likely at Wayne State University or at Duke University than at Morehouse College, a Negro institution in the South.

Thus, the contradiction reflected in anti-white black militants' choice of white campuses as the arena of action for the Black Studies movement is but a facet of the long-standing ambivalence underlying black-white interactions in American society. Many blacks genuinely dislike or hate whites, and *vice versa*, yet simultaneously recognise that they need whites—and *vice versa*. It seems to me that there is simply no meaningful conception, existentially speaking, of being a black American or white American which excludes this sort of ambivalence.[2]

Another difference between the earlier movements to redress white racism's influence in the portrayal of Negroes and the Black Studies movement is the new leading role of militants of lower-class backgrounds. Although middle-class students initiated the Black Studies movement on white campuses, students from lower-class backgrounds—whose numbers increased markedly in the years 1967-1970—have largely seized the leadership of the movement. They have impressed the movement with a style more to their liking: they virtually monopolise the criteria of legitimate "relevance" in the Black Studies movement. Anyone contending for leading roles in the Black Studies movement must be adept at skills not uncommon in the black Ghetto. These skills involve the quick and facile manipulation of others for short-run benefits. They include largely verbal skills which go by a variety of designations like "rapping", "conning", "put-on", etc.

Black students from lower-class backgrounds are more effective at these skills, and less self-conscious in their use, than students of middle-class rearing. But middle-class Negro students

[2] *cf.* Ralph Ellison, *Shadow and Act* (1964).

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do learn to master these skills—in order to hold leading roles in the Black Studies movement. They also must affect, if they do not genuinely possess, behaviour patterns and trappings indicative of alienation from white culture and institutions. Even so, the middle-class student in the Black Studies movement is often a dependent figure. Lower-class and working-class militants dictate the style and much of the substance of the middle-class militants' role in the movement.

This situation, incidentally, stands in sharp contrast to the role of middle-class Negroes in the "New Negro Movement" of the 1920s. Even when this movement's activity was informed by lower-class attributes, the process of selection was controlled by middle-class blacks, and not, as currently in the Black Studies movement, dictated by lower-class factors. Similarly, the Garvey Movement (though more adept at appealing to lower-class blacks than the "New Negro Movement") entertained little dictation from the Negro lower class. The lower middle class (many of West Indian origin) was in firm control of Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association and saw itself as an instrument for the uplift—moral and material—of lower-class blacks.

THE INFLUENCE of lower-class militants in the Black Studies movement on white campuses determines much of the pattern of demands in the movement. For the typical lower-class Negro student on white campuses—most of whom have been recruited under special circumstances in the past three years—the rigour and discipline of academic competition are quite alien. The student's response to this situation is one of "culture shock." He feels marked estrangement and experiences a sense of emasculation. He becomes aggressive toward the emasculating environment or culture of the white college—a response which is exacerbated by a variety of white racist patterns in white colleges. Moreover, he turns to black nationalist ideologies to lend content or purpose to his aggression.

At worst, the black nationalist ideologies facilitate pseudo-solutions. They induce their adherents to assume rebellious postures in face of frustrating and confusing situations on white campuses. These postures, often millennial in form, draw upon behavioural patterns in the ghetto sub-system, including violence. But rebellious postures, however emotionally satisfying, have doubtful relevance to a Negro student's basic needs in a university.

At best, the black nationalist ideologies are therapeutic. They allow their adherents to salve wounds stemming from dehumanising encounters with white racism. They offer an incentive and perhaps a framework for retrieving one's self-image from white racist derision. Yet the therapeutic impact of black nationalist ideologies is a doubtful substitute for coming to grips with academic competition in a white university.

None the less, many lower-class Negro students on the white campus consider the therapeutic impact of black nationalism as such a substitute. They refuse to undergo the change in attitude necessary to compete. *Much of the militant Black Studies movement is an ideologically ornamented expression of this refusal.*

Middle-class Negro students, too, consider as valuable the therapeutic features of the interplay of black nationalism and Black Studies. Indeed, middle-class black students often surpass their lower-class fellows in demonstrating fidelity to this situation. Middle-class blacks are, after all, still looked upon with suspicion by the lower-class Negro and are required to prove themselves. Thus for many lower-class and middle-class black students fidelity to black nationalist ideologies has become the measure of one's worth as a *man.*

THE INFLUENCE OF NATIONALIST IDEOLOGIES on the behaviour of Negro students on white campuses has resulted in some questionable proposals for Black Studies programmes. A leading member of the Association of Black Collegians at Princeton University has proposed, for example, that the ideal Black Studies programme

> must create a black leadership group that readily and permanently identifies with, and is culturally proud of, other black Americans in order to counteract the negative influences produced by centuries of Uncle Tom survival tactics that still plague the race.

This conception of a Black Studies programme introduces more unacceptable than virtuous features into the university. Courses in the humanities and social sciences that consciously seek to make Negro students "proud of being black" would likely be one-dimensional glorifications of the black heritage.

The militant advocates of Black Studies fail to recognise that the purpose of the humanities

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and social sciences is, at the very least, *to teach critical methods of thought.* But how can this be achieved in a Black Studies programme, or any other academic study, whose ideological assumptions are ethnocentric, culturally xenophobic, and authoritarian? Nor can critical methods of thought be achieved in a Black Studies programme that denies participation to white scholars. Negro scholars certainly have a place in Black Studies programmes—perhaps a special place. But white scholars belong there too.

Other proposals for Black Studies programmes emphasise the "relevance" of courses to the Negro community. For some who talk about "relevance," the ideal Black Studies programme should, it seems, be something like a glorified school of social service administration. In such a programme all courses (especially in the social sciences) should entail student contact with Negro communities. The militant advocates of Black Studies prefer courses that allow students to organise pressure groups, nationalist gatherings, and various community organisations. Such organisations, it is argued, would constitute a "contribution" by Black Studies programmes to the needs of the Negro community.

No doubt it is desirable—indeed, necessary—to use college facilities in ways that would advance such services as medical care for Negroes and the poor. But this sort of activity concerns mainly the technical and professional fields, not the fields that embrace Black Studies—that is the humanities and social sciences. Technical and quasi-professional two-year colleges should, for example, be expanded in cities, in order to train Negro nurses and sundry other technicians. Some of these technical colleges might also be organised as adjuncts of established institutions of higher education. But in general this important means of making higher education more immediately serviceable to the needs of urban Negroes and the poor has little to do with Black Studies.

Forward to Common Sense

MANY NEGRO STUDENTS consider the university as insensitive to the need to reverse white racism as all other American institutions. No doubt the university has not moved as quickly or as effectively as it should to help counteract white racism. But it is an error to equate the university with other institutions in this regard. Once the U.S. colleges and universities become aware of their failure in racial matters (and certainly black students' militancy has heightened this awareness) they are capable of becoming a major force for ridding American society of its racist ways. The establishment of Black Studies programmes may well be an important aspect of the university's contribution. But if the university is to succeed in this, the proposals for Black Studies emanating from Negro militants must display more common sense than they have thus far.

Little of long run value for society can be expected of Black Studies programmes organised on the basis of xenophobic ideological and black racialist criteria. Innovation, of course, is certainly in order in the establishment of black studies. The perceptive Negro student, moreover, can be the source of such innovation. But special care must attend the academic organisation of Black Studies—which is an inter-disciplinary subject of the first order—so as to ensure that a student "majoring in Black Studies" is required to master at least one of the major disciplines in the social sciences or humanities. For example, the Harvard University Faculty committee which reported to the Faculty in January 1969 on Afro-American studies faced this squarely.[3] In order to guard against dilettantism, the Harvard committee proposed that students majoring in Afro-American studies be required to fulfil a half-major in one established discipline like economics, sociology, political science, history, etc. Like all inter-disciplinary programmes, a Black Studies programme must ward against producing a jack-of-all-disciplines but a master of none.

Furthermore, the best undergraduate education is largely preparation for post-graduate and professional training. The first-class graduate departments in the social sciences and humanities do not want students who lack adequate preparation. If the Negro undergraduate concentrator in Black Studies is to gain admission into the better graduate schools, he must demonstrate proficiency in a discipline, in addition to his special capacity derived from a Black Studies programme to apply that discipline to Negro history, culture, etc. In short, dilettantes, black or white, are

[3] See Henry Rosovsky, *et al.*, Report of the Faculty Committee on African and Afro-American Studies (Cambridge, Mass., 1969).

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not high on the list for admission and advancement.

The confusion of the academic features of Black Studies with the psychological and political benefits derived from black nationalist militancy has also resulted in unrealistic proposals in regard to who should major, or concentrate, in Black Studies programmes. These proposals suggest, for example, that the segment of Negro students who enter college with measurable academic deficiencies should concentrate in Black Studies—in lieu of remedial education! But a deficient black student will find no panacea in Black Studies: he will remain deficient. Only remedial study —and extraordinary persistence—will alter academic deficiencies, whether one is black or white.

Militant advocates of Black Studies also intimate that *the majority* of Negro students in white colleges should concentrate in Black Studies. But this is questionable, to say the least. Perhaps 70% of all blacks now in college are attending white institutions, and the opportunity at places like Wayne State University, the University of California, City University of New York, Princeton University, among others, to study the scientific and technological fields should not be lost because of the ideological, political, and psychological attraction of Black Studies. As Professor Sir Arthur Lewis recently pointed out in an article in the *New York Times Magazine*, the road to the top and middle jobs in American society (of which Negroes hold only 2% at the top and 4% in the middle) is through the sciences and technical fields—and not through Black Studies! As to who should major in Black Studies, a reasonable answer is available: serious intellectual and practical problems can be solved by the capable student of the humanities and social sciences who has a special interest in Black Studies; and the desire to solve these problems is the most valid reason for majoring in Black Studies.

FINALLY, WHITE STUDENTS will likely have as much interest in Black Studies as Negro students. The policy of barring or discouraging participation in Black Studies to white students—pursued until recently at a first-rank college like Antioch College—is a great disservice. If greater and more honest knowledge of the Negro in American (and world) history can contribute to the development of a better social order, then it is folly to restrict white participation.

Beyond Trauma and Pathology

WHAT DISTINGUISHES the black student militant in the context of the general unrest in American colleges?

Negro students face many of the problems met by their white peers. Both white and black students confront problems of financing their education, for example; though Negro dependence upon financial aid is heavier than white. Black and white students also face induction into the armed forces (and especially into the much questioned Viet Nam war).

Thus the concerns Negro and white students share in common might be expected to induce not dissimilar political responses, other things being equal. But then, other things are not quite equal. White students have neither the experience nor the memory of the kind of trauma associated with being black in American society. I daresay that the road out of poverty and racial or ethnic derision travelled by the parents, kin, and ancestors of some white students was, though hardly pleasant, far less mean, spiteful, and intractable than the road travelled by Negroes. Nor can the white student charge the American university with the type of neglect or indifference it has exhibited—until most recently and and then under militant pressures—toward Negroes.

These and other historical and contemporary forces in American society mark off the situation of Negro students as special. Most significantly, they make it difficult for the Negro student, in white or black colleges, to rationalise on his own terms as a student the wider forces of black America that impinge upon him. I mean those forces that have turned the growth of militant Negro protest of the 1950s and 1960s into violent channels. Violence is hardly new to a technologically and politically aggressive society like America, and the Negro's current use of violence as a political instrument has precedents galore. Yet the role of the violent features of black militancy among Negro students is perplexing and of far-reaching consequence. It puts the educational future of thousands of Negro students in doubt and it frustrates the intellectual fabric of the American college.

It is indeed the violence which has been associated with black student militancy that, next to the nature of the goals of black student militants, distinguishes it in the context of general campus unrest. Negro student militancy, in both white and black colleges, is

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more violent and more obstructive of normal academic life.

Violence, particularly on white campuses, seems at times endemic to Negro student militancy. It is central to the assertive rhetoric used to convey the ideas and goals of black militancy. It seems, alas, of profound symbolic and psychological value to the militant Negro's quest for a new manhood (and womanhood), free of all vestiges of white society's evaluation. Indeed, the place of violence in Negro student militancy borders, at times, on the pathological. Thus, given the tendency of militant Negro students at white colleges to politicise virtually the total setting of college life, a spectre of intermittent violence might well hover over many colleges in the near future.

A CORRECTIVE OR COUNTERVAILING TENDENCY to this ominous eventuality, however, is perhaps the nature of the goals or demands of militant Negro students. Both on white and black campuses the demands of militant Negro students have been rather more concrete than those of militant white students (though the demands of blacks at white colleges are more political than students' demands at Negro colleges). Whereas militant white student groups seek some form of overall reorganisation of American society, with a redistribution of wealth and the demilitarisation of life, etc., most militant Negro student groups on white campuses, though definitely anti-militaristic and anti-Viet Nam war, have shunned putting forth such claims. Their demands concern overwhelmingly such matters as increasing the proportion of Negro students, more financial aid, hiring more Negro faculty, separate living or recreational quarters for blacks, more courses concerning the life and history of blacks, etc.

These requirements fall quite short of the scope of demands of the influential white student militants, and as such are conducive to some kind of response within the political and material capacity of colleges. Clearly universities cannot as such end the Viet Nam war, demilitarise American life, redistribute income, and the rest of it; but they can (though not without special outside aid) increase drastically the number of Negro students, offer remedial education as a part of this expansion, give more financial aid to blacks, etc. To the extent that colleges, white and black, can more readily respond to demands of militant Negro students, the militancy of these students may be expected in time to abate, or at least to accommodate to normal requirements of academic life, free of the violence that has heretofore characterised Negro student militancy.

Yet it is not possible to conclude this issue quite so sanguinely. For one thing, if there is (as there seems) an endemic violent strain in Negro student militancy—especially on white campuses where whites are inevitably in majority—then the stabilising function of a rather rational or concrete goal orientation in black student militancy is put into doubt. Second, there is more than a little uneasiness to be expected from the adoption by many white colleges of Black Studies programmes that are more concerned with the propaganda of black nationalism than with scholarship and critical thought. Far too many white colleges have conceded such programmes or curricula to militant Negro students, and can hardly escape the consequent difficulties. Indeed, Barrington Moore, the Harvard sociologist, offers a rather dismal prospect of the academic problem of accommodating this sort of Black Studies enclave, suggesting that white faculty who have their fill of Negro students and their nationalistic militancy might well opt

> to remove black students from the "regular campus". . . . Instead of setting up a separate physical plant, which is much too expansive, the removal can take the form of increasing the social and intellectual exclusion that already exists . . . . The result would be a repetition within the academic scene of the situation in the larger society: separate but highly unequal education, a militant ghetto uneasily contained within the larger group.

One can only hope that this situation does not develop on white campuses. What can be done to avert it is difficult for me to say. But surely a viable response by American colleges to the more rational demands of Negro students is necessary. Moreover, for this response to even approximate effectiveness, colleges must gain greater Federal government support for financial aid, remedial programmes, and the like, all of which are clearly indispensable to the expansion of Negro students at white colleges. Finally, it is again to the Federal government that one must look for the leadership and resources necessary to solve—or begin to solve—the backlog of problems that have produced a violent-prone militancy as a prominent political method among many blacks, students or not. Only long-run solutions to these problems can provide the conditions which should lead to an abatement both at white and black colleges of the normless features of black student militancy.

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AUTHORS & CRITICS

Second Thoughts on Ezra Pound

By Daniel Cory

IN CONCLUDING a remarkable essay in a recent issue of ENCOUNTER ["Literature & The Law of Diminishing Returns", May 1970] Arthur Koestler observed that "if the Creator had a purpose in equipping us with a neck, he surely meant us to stick it out." I have been acutely conscious of having stuck my neck out properly in publishing a "memoir" of Ezra Pound that I hardly expected would stir a thick pother of indignation.[1] As an independent "man of letters" (may I still use such a dirty out-dated label?), my intention had been to clear my own mind about certain features of the *Cantos* that baffled a whole-hearted appreciation, and to sketch an Ezra of yesterday and today. Although I was residing in a Poundian stronghold manned (or mostly "womanned") by a fervent team of cheer-leaders, I thought one obscure dissenting voice might complain unheeded. Not a bit of it. I have been accused, initially, of "inventing" various comments that Ezra made to me in Venice in October 1966 *à propos* of his *Cantos*.[2] Another irate disciple then protested that I lacked the "intellectual equipment" to tackle a masterpiece. Somewhat later it was rumoured that I am one of a small number of jealous literary "Philistines" sinning against "the children of light": *i.e.*, the Poundians. So I have been needled to reply, firstly to these accusations, and then to supplement my "memoir" with some "second thoughts" on the *Cantos*.

THE INITIAL OBJECTION that was lodged against me was a novel experience and rather unpleasant. If I had been only accused of exploiting the misgivings of a discouraged old man, the charge would have been of a different order and less despicable. But if you happen to share some of Ezra's misgivings about his *Cantos*, his comments will strike you as being a matter of confirmation rather than exploitation. I assumed, rightly or wrongly, that an author is entitled to discuss his work, and that furthermore he is in a unique position to assess the value of it. And although Ezra agreed that the *Cantos* have "no basic structure" (he has said the same thing to several other people), and added that he had "botched the job"—that it was not a "work of art", the Poundians have refused to accept such a crucial devaluation. Not all of them, however, have accused me of being a fabricator; and I am only interested in understanding how the people who grant that *I reported truly a conversation*, can nevertheless disregard the *ipsissima verba* of their demigod.

I suppose they can maintain that Ezra is so *avvilito* (cowed and down-hearted) that he no longer gives a damn what he says ("O let an old man rest!"). It is true that he is "a broken bundle of mirrors" compared with the vigorous buoyant man that I knew in Rapallo in the 1930s. As he confesses in some recent and moving lines:

A blown husk that is finished
but the light sings eternal
a pale flare over marshes
Where the salt hay whispers to tide's change.

Ezra Pound is suffering from a profound form of depression: the symptoms are unmistakable. But like Hamlet, Ezra is only mad in certain winds: when the hand of the barometer is favourable, he can not only tell a hawk from a handsaw—he is as clear as an unclouded sky. He feels humiliated at being utterly dependent on a few people. Although he is not wanting for material comfort, he has no proper control over the considerable royalties from his books. His movements are of necessity supervised; and I suspect that even his ideas and comments are controlled as much as possible. His resignation is therefore absolute. As he said to me, "I am content to abide by whatever arrangements are made. . ." What a tragic confession from a proud old swashbuckler!

At the same time Ezra recognises the inevitableness of his predicament. He admires a great deal the courage, and is often worried about the health, of his constant indispensable companion, Olga Rudge. ("This life will kill her. It's my fault, but I can't help it.") I have tried to state as simply as I can the pathetic situation that embarrasses a visitor who is left alone with him for a half-hour or so. Perhaps

[1] "Ezra Pound: A Memoir" (ENCOUNTER, May 1968).

[2] For a blow-by-blow account of the ensuing brawl, *vide* letters "To the Editor" in the *Times Literary Supplement* (March 6, April 4, 10, 17, in 1969).

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it may be said that I goaded him into talking about the *Cantos*. But can one spend all the time asking the best way to get to a certain church in Venice? If you have made a sustained effort to understand his *chef d'oeuvre*, is it so unnatural to embrace a brief interlude to discuss certain features that have impeded a hearty approbation? If, furthermore, it is whispered that he is no longer in a fit condition to appraise the *Cantos*, how are we to reconcile this with the facts that he can still polish the rough edges of a canto, make a translation from an Italian poet for the *Sunday Times*, and even write a rather surprising foreword to a *Selection* of his *Cantos* for Faber and Faber?[3]

Personally, I am convinced that Ezra has certain misgivings about the organisation of an "epic" that he has been working on for over fifty years. But is this so astonishing? Surely he is not the only writer who has been dissatisfied with the end-product of a long ordeal. All I want to emphasise now is that if we can't take Ezra's own strictures seriously, why should we be persuaded to overlook them by an inner circle of *committed critics* who have staked their literary reputations on private explications of a baffling text? I don't want a whitewashed idealised version of the *Cantos*, any more than I want a whitewashed Image of the man. I think Ezra is great enough to be seen plain, warts and all, and that goes for his poetry as well.

AS FOR THE NEXT OBJECTION, that my "intellectual equipment" is inadequate to tackle the *Cantos*, I would like to know just what kind of "equipment" is presupposed for initiation into a select circle? I did the author the honour of reading the text carefully—but apparently that is not enough. For I have not read everything that has been written anent the *Cantos* because I am wary of far-fetched cues of explanation, *soi-disant* "threads of light", or professional mumbo-jumbo. I simply read what Ezra had written, not trying to unearth what he had in the back of his mind, or what he ought to have said, or what he "really meant." I am not in the academic racket, nor looking for a belated Ph.D. or an increase in stipend that is contingent upon a book (just a book!) being produced by a nervewracking dead-line. I have not had the patience to track down all the references, historical, literary or personal, that delight the "research fry" (especially if they have been favoured by a confidential nod from the author): and many of those I did spot struck me as being quite unnecessary to either the import or enhancement of a passage. Neither did I make a pilgrimage to Pisa to check how the slanting sunset gilds the leaning tower; nor did I camp outdoors on a cold autumn night to sense how bitterly the hoar-frost gripped my tent (I took Ezra's word for it). On the other hand I had several opportunities in Venice to confirm the uncanny accuracy of his description of "*the soap-smooth stone posts where San Vio/meets with il Canal Grande. . . .*" I don't know Chinese or Greek, so if the ideograms or classic quotes are to have any conceptual or auditory significance I have to resort to a crib. I am too old to study these ancient symbols in order to appreciate, *inter alia*, the numerous authoritative props that are intended to re-enforce the message and "structure" of the *Cantos*. But if my linguistic equipment is inadequate, I fear also that my special "intellectual equipment" has been a disadvantage to me in appreciating Ezra's "Epic." Twenty-five years with Santayana, and long spells under Russell and G. E. Moore, may well have made me over-critical and blurred the innocent outlook of the layman and of many poets.

The last objection, namely that I am one of a small band of isolated literary "Philistines" sinning against the "children of light", I found rather startling. I have confessed to being an old fogey, it never occurred to me that the upholding of certain literary criteria was equivalent to being a Philistine. So it was indeed comforting to discover that Robert Conquest in another essay in ENCOUNTER was less severe on the Philistines than on the Moabites.[4] (Mr Conquest was concerned with exposing the degrading racket now rampant in the transplanting of various classics into a current lingo, but much of what he says is also pertinent to what is happening in literary criticism.) He writes:

> It is a century since Matthew Arnold introduced into English, in the sense in which we now use it, the word "Philistine," and defined him for us as "a strong, dogged opponent of the chosen people, of the children of light. . . ." But we need to remember that Israel's early troubles were not always from this straightforward foe. On the other flank lay a more insidious enemy of their own blood, the Moabites, who, from their capital at Shittim, infiltrated temple and harem and set the children of light

[3] I say "surprising", because on recalling all the contempt that Ezra has poured on psychoanalysis in general, I was startled to find him appealing to Jung for confirmation of the "creative" role played by the unconscious in works of art. We "creators" do the best we can: let the critics (especially of the "inner circle") decide whether or not we have been successful.

[4] "The Abomination of Moab: On Translating Verse", May 1970.

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> whoring after strange doctrine . . . Philistia is, at least for the moment, a beaten force. Today's tocsin, for everyone who cares for the arts, is rather, "The Moabites be upon thee!"

In a great deal of the ingenious tampering with difficult texts being encouraged in academic circles today, there is such a looseness of criteria of appreciation, such a nervous temptation to find a "structure" in the most untidy works, that something has obviously gone wrong. Anybody who thinks he can find, for example, even the suggestion of a structure in *Finnegans Wake,* ought to go back to Shittim. The relentless fact is that *a diarrhoea cannot be structured,* be it spattered on a canvas, or over a block of stone, or on a blank page. We must employ certain yardsticks in evaluating so-called "works of art". And when a young American aesthete remarks to me that "the poypuss [purpose] of the banana in the lower left-hand corner is to 'structure' the pitchur [picture]", I disagree with him. Verily, Mr Conquest, the Moabites are upon us. But I propose to forget now the accusations that I am a liar, a semi-illiterate, and a Philistine, and risk some "second thoughts" on the *Cantos.*

WHEN I WROTE in the "memoir" that I could not detect any mastering pattern in Ezra's "epic", and that the bulk of it remains for me the jottings in an agenda, the notes in the log-book of a rudderless ship, my vexation was entirely different from a rebound to *Finnegans Wake.* It was disappointment rather than disgust. (Joyce's work is a compensation that failing eyesight found in polyglot virtuosity and phonetic jugglery.) For the *Cantos* are relieved by passages of miraculous beauty; and this intermittent star-dust largely atones for the jerky insertions of ideograms and remote references, long stretches of patched-up history, and the rantings of a reformer. Such a mixed bag is bound to afford an unrivalled opportunity for the professional explicators to enjoy a field-day. Tom can inform us that some complex ideogram holds a canto together like an irresistible magnet, Dick can disagree with him and point out the contextual relevance of another alien tag, and then Professor Harry can loom on the horizon and resolve all complications in some higher metaphorical synthesis. So it goes on, criticism feeding on criticism, and Ph.D.s sprouting all over the place. The only danger is that in the meantime we may lose sight of what Ezra actually put down on the page—of the text that provoked all this exegetical luxuriance. It is hardly sufficient to label the *Cantos* as "seminal", sprinkle them in your opening paragraph with complimentary rose-water, and then take off into a rarified air of irrelevant speculation. The few "new approaches" that I have thumbed through all display a professional ingenuity that ends up by making an initial confusion more confounded.

A recent book of a different and more useful kind is Noel Stock's exhaustively documented *Life of Ezra Pound.*[5] And after consulting it the reader may accept with less surprise the misgivings that were vouchsafed to me in Venice. There are many early indications in Ezra's letters that from the beginning he was uncertain about what direction and shape the *Cantos* were to take. In a letter to Joyce in 1917 he wrote:

> I have begun an endless poem, of no known category. Phanopoeia or something or other, all about everything. . . . I wonder what you will make of it. Probably too sprawling and unmusical to find favour in your ears!

And ten years later—

> In a letter to his father . . . Pound admitted that his cantos so far were obscure, "Afraid", he said, "the whole damn poem is rather obscure, especially in fragments." As an aid he suggested that it was "rather like, or unlike subject and response and counter subject in fugue", and he gave three headings under which the poem might be considered: (1) The "live man" going down into the world of the dead, (2) The "repeat" in history, and (3) The "magic moment" or moment of metamorphosis, the "bust through" from the everyday world into the divine or permanent world of the gods.

Now this early hint that the structure of the *Cantos* might be likened to that of a fugue has been eagerly appropriated by some of the Poundians; but unfortunately it appears that Ezra no longer relishes a musical analogy. As Mr Reck reports:

> Among the speculations of his booklet *A Packet for Ezra Pound,* William Butler Yeats described *The Cantos* as a fugue. At Saint Elizabeth's Pound declared that Yeats' essay had done more than anything else to create confusion . . . and suggested that he had followed, rather, "the ideogrammatic method" in composing the poem. It is hard to say why Pound was so violently against Yeats' idea that *The Cantos* are a fugue (which, Yeats wrote, was how Pound himself expressed it, at Rapallo, in 1929).[6]

But deferring the question of an early "fugue-structure" and a later "ideogrammatic

[5] Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (Routledge, 1970).

[6] Michael Reck, *Ezra Pound: A Close-Up.* (1967, p. 192).

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method", one thing at least seems clear: an overwhelming desire to compose a modern "epic" impelled Ezra nearly sixty years ago to ignore the proven advantage of having some preconceived blueprint to guide a big poem ("all about everything") over uncharted seas. No doubt he had some hazy notion of what he wanted to do and where he wanted to go, as he indicated in the letter to his father. He had devised an original elastic net into which he could stuff "everything" that happened to interest him. But a commodious flexible form for an "epic" does not guarantee coherence or development of content; and it is precisely the arrangement of content that gives structure to any imaginative work. So Ezra embarked with a motley crew—Ruy Diaz, Pieire de Maensac, John Borgia, Poicebot, a "squirt of an Ausstrrian with a rose in his button-hole", the splendid Malatesta—and hoped everything would go smoothly.

THIS IMPERIOUS DESIRE to "get sailing" is endemic among American writers, and they don't mind shelving the eventual problem of where to *dis*embark. We are reminded of Whitman:

Sail forth—steer for the deep waters only
Reckless O soul, exploring, I with thee, and thou with me,
For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to go.
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.

There is a strong as well as a disastrous side to the Pioneer spirit. Sometimes it pays off. The Founding Fathers soon settled with the Redskins, imported human labour from Africa, and found gold in California. On the other hand, the inhabitants of North Viet Nam are proving rather recalcitrant. Ezra wanted to do something really "big"—something bigger than *Ulysses* or *The Waste Land*.[7] He tackled single-handed the whole world of "kulchur", ransacked the most remote and difficult texts, and challenged the big manipulators of "money in history" to a showdown.

Another American poet who attempted an "epic" this century was Hart Crane. And he also ran into complications, long periods of uncertainty, over the direction and structure of *The Bridge*. One of the most candid admissions of the advantage of a prior blueprint is packed into one sentence of a letter Crane wrote to his close friend Waldo Frank: "I didn't realise that a bridge is begun from the two ends at once."[8] Ah, there's the rub! You may arch off confidently from Manhattan Island, extend your middle span across the water of the East River, but how are you going to get to Brooklyn if you know nothing of the shore-line and have never even heard of the old Dodgers or the Rev Henry Ward Beecher?

But the metaphor of a "bridge" is inappropriate if applied in any sense to the *Cantos*. It suggests an engineering or structural effort by Ezra, rather than the intellectual odyssey of an intrepid tourist picking up persons and places, past and present, that happen to engage his attention. I don't like the fugue-metaphor any better, because I at least fail to find in the *Cantos* a *deployment of themes* to justify such an analogy. A fugue—as Ezra hinted to his father—is a composition in which the subject is given out by one part and immediately taken up by a second, *its answer*, during which the first part supplies an accompaniment or counter-subject, and so on. Of course there are themes in the *Cantos:* how can you write unless it is about something or other? A poet would have to adopt a cult of silence if he remained permanently in the ineffectual state that once alarmed Mallarmé:

O nuits! ni la clarté déserte de ma lampe
Sur le vide papier que la blancheur défend . . .

In short, for a poem of any amplitude to possess a "structure", there must be a satisfactory arrangement of content to which the reader can respond aesthetically.

NOR IS IT VERY CONVINCING to claim that the *Cantos*, taken as a whole, exemplify an enormous ideogram, one character after another squeezed together until a moment of "splendour" floors the groggy Poundian. And to appeal to Yeats' "great acorn of light" in order to reconcile all the items is too picturesque and esoteric for a disciple of Santayana. It may be due to a drilling in philosophy, but if Ezra had agreed with Radhakrishnan that "ultimate reality is the coincidence of opposites", the clouds might have been partially dispelled.

There are contingent biographical circumstances that militate against even a dimly conceived blueprint having been realised. The most striking instance is the sudden advent of *The Pisan Cantos*. If the War had taken a different course in the early 1940s, they never would have been written, and 20th-century poetry would have been the poorer. But the very fact that Ezra could carry on, in the extremely exacting conditions that he did, confirms that his big poem had been unfolding in

[7] Ezra told me that Eliot had once remarked that he [Eliot] could never cope with a long poem or modern "epic."

[8] R. W. Butterfield, *The Broken Arc: A Study of Hart Crane*. (Oliver & Boyd, 1969), p. 140.

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a manner haphazard enough to accommodate any contingencies. At any rate, he was not completely derailed by events. Perhaps the unpublished cantos—72 and 73—might help to give his work some cumulative cohesion. (I understand that they were written for the most part in Italian.) But it would be a poetical cohesion, rather than an historical synthesis.

I cannot agree with some Poundians that Ezra caught up with the drift of his *Cantos* in the later sections, "Rock Drill" and "Thrones." They rely too much on padding—ideograms and alien tags galore, with recall of early lines and incidents that do not always strike one as being the inevitable return of eagerly awaited themes. But in a fairly recent addition—Canto 116[9]—Ezra steers by radar the fog-bound reader towards some mysterious haven yclept "IT." Now "It" is not Hart Crane's Brooklyn —that much is certain. But is it a Realm of Benevolence or something more solid? That is the question. And if I expose (like an "explicator" seeking a Ph.D.!) an epistemological ambiguity in this canto, I still think it is one of the finest and I fail to understand how it could be omitted from any selection made from the 117 to date. We find Ezra confessing that

. . . my errors and wrecks lie about me
and I am not a demigod,
I cannot make it cohere.

Then a little later he reflects:

. . . A nice quiet paradise
Over the shambles
And some climbing
Before the take-off,
To "see again,"
The verb is "see" not "walk on"
i.e. it coheres all right
Even if my notes do not cohere.

The key-word to consider here is that pivotal pronoun "it." When Ezra first says that he "cannot make it cohere" there is no difficulty: he is admitting that he is unable to whip his "notes" into a satisfactory shape or coherent message. But the sudden shift of reference we encounter in the later line, "it coheres all right", makes us pause and ask just what it is that Ezra claims "coheres". According to Mr Reck

> "It" is nature. This is the culmination of Pound's wisdom. Nature's process is a great coherence. We must follow it. The external world is all.

Now *if* this is really the culmination of Ezra's wisdom (and Mr Reck's), it is only the initiation of more confusion for some readers. In the first place, can we really use a word like "coherence" to describe the contingent and often recalcitrant processes of Nature at large? I should require F. H. Bradley's faith in an all-embracing, supra-temporal, internally-related Absolute Experience, to maintain that an earthquake (like the recent one in Peru) devastating some fertile region was an instance of "coherence" in Nature. It is only when we contemplate the more familiar and amicable rhythms in existence—white blossoms dressing the trees in the spring, and the same branches heavy with luscious fruit in the autumn; babies born with all their fingers and toes nine months after an exhilarating orgasm; a country at peace under a wise ruler for, say, a decade—that everything seems to be going smoothly, "coherently." Of course poets have always been prone to relapse into a home-spun, pre-scientific, animistic interpretation of the natural world. The eye of innocence is essential to naive realism, but hardly an instrument to disclose the full complicated texture of reality. I prefer to reserve the term "coherence" for some satisfactory arrangement of material, be it verbal or the artistic moulding of matter. So *if* Mr Reck's reading of the line "it coheres all right" is correct, then I fear Ezra has another *faux pas* to add to the heap that lies about him. For it is precisely his "notes" that ought to be arranged in a "coherent" manner; and I don't mean like the steps in a deductive argument, but in an aesthetically persuasive pattern. Coherence is a witness to the triumph of the imagination over some diffuse or obstinate material. And when this victory has been achieved, we are rewarded by a work of art.

THE SPONTANEOUS inclination of many poets to remain and work on the level of naive realism[10] has been encouraged in Ezra's case by his long interest in ancient Chinese literature. In an effort to appreciate afresh the "philosophical" outlook that was prevalent in China hundreds of years before Plato and Christ, I reopened an old favourite of mine—*Mencius on the Mind* by I. A. Richards. Among the key-words (or rather ideograms) that it is so enormously difficult to transplant into the English medium is precisely this term "Nature." According to Mr Richards—

> *Hsing* stands both for Human Nature—the subject inquired about in most of these passages

[9] *Drafts and Fragments of Cantos CX-CXVII* (Faber & Faber, 1970).

[10] This is hardly true of all poets. Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe are notable exceptions who kept abreast of the science of their times and incorporated it frequently in their works.

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> from Mencius—and for Nature in general. It is useful to have here . . . such a striking instance of the identification (or better, non-separation) of the two . . . we must from the outset realize that psychology and physics are not two separated studies for early Chinese thought (or for later); and that, however metaphysically abhorrent it may be for us, the mind and its objects are not set over against one another for Mencius, or (I understand) for any of his fellows.[11]

Is it not likely that Ezra's whole outlook is permeated by this kind of non-technical simplicity? In reading many of the *Cantos* it may be necessary to recover the "climate" of ancient pre-scientific, feudal, ceremonial and humanistic naive realism. And above all (this is my difficulty!) to forget about Kant, physiology, and the causal theory of perception. For all that—as Ezra might put it—is "crap." So that in saying "it coheres all right", he may not have intended to imply any separation between either Human Nature and Nature at large, or between the mind and its objects. In that case, Mr Reck is certainly wrong in saying that for Ezra the "external world is all": any distinction between "external" and "internal" is irrelevant and misleading. I find the epistemological innocence of Confucius and Mencius and Pound rather enviable; as I. A. Richards adds ". . . there seems to have been no problem of knowledge for Chinese thought."

In his book on Mencius I. A. Richards isolated and arranged for expository purposes only the passages that might be called "psychological" or subsumed under a title like "philosophy of mind." The great bulk, he says, is a "mass of social recommendations, ethics, anecdote, and etiquette which is the *Works*." Many years ago when I consulted an inadequate but dignified translation of this "mass" I was singularly disappointed: the maxims and mottoes struck me as being on the same level as the list of precepts that Polonius gave to his son when the latter was about to leave for France. This is not to deny that the public does not fall for such guides to conduct—such prudent admonitions. We all know that millions today are sold on the sayings in a little Red Book. Nevertheless, it seems rather late in the day for a major poet to exploit and recommend homely apophthegms as a substitute for science and philosophy. To my mind, "neither a borrower nor a lender be" is just as good a motto as the ones that Ezra proposed to hang on the walls in Rapallo in the War Years.

[11] I. A. Richards, *Mencius on the Mind.* (1932) p. 5.

[12] Italics mine. In a marginal note Santayana has written that "celebrate all night" is perhaps better than "too glad to sleep".

THERE IS, HOWEVER, an important essence to be distilled from Mencius' teachings; and Richards sums up very beautifully what he takes this "essence" to be:

> But when the Prince of Lu proposed to appoint Yao Cheng Tzu as Minister, Mencius was too glad to sleep. This although Yao Cheng Tzu was neither very skilful nor a deep scholar, but merely *one in whom the constituent impulses of human nature were undistorted.*[12]

The words that I have underlined are final and in accord with the outstanding moral insights of the Western world. And if they embody the central message that Ezra was bent on delivering, I devoutly wish he had embalmed it in one spendid canto, instead of spraying partial reflections of it *ad nauseam* all over his poem.

The difficulties of carrying through a long poem to a triumphant conclusion were fully realised by Eliot, and perhaps this awareness of insurmountability is what discouraged him from ever attempting an "epic". As he wrote in "The Music of Poetry" (1942):

> . . . in a poem of any length, there must be transitions between passages of greater and less intensity, to give a rhythm of fluctuating emotion essential to the musical structure of the whole; . . . in the sense implied by that context, it may be said that no poet can write a poem of amplitude unless he is a master of the prosaic.

Here is the key to a rejection of the *Cantos* if proposed as a work of art. Not only is there a failure to arrange these "transitions" of poetical intensity, but when the star-dust no longer drifts over the lines, and Ezra relapses into his jottings, we are hardly conscious of "a master of the prosaic." The shift is from concentrated poetry into banality of expression. Is any intelligent person really impressed when Plotinus (has Ezra studied him?) is dismissed as a "bellyache"? or Alexander Hamilton as "the Prime snot in ALL American history"? This offhand way of speaking is unworthy—not *digne de son talent.* Nor is an exasperating tendency to remind us that Uncle Ez said this or that on such and such a date. I recall what Santayana once wrote about Robert Browning:

> There is never anything largely composed in the spirit of pure beauty, nothing devotedly finished. . . .The poet's mind cannot reach equilibrium; at best he oscillates between opposed extravagances; his final word is still a *boutade,* still an explosion. He has no sustained nobility of style. He affects with the reader a confidential and vulgar manner, so as to be more sincere and to feel more at home. . . . The author likes to remind us of himself by some confidential wink or genial poke in the ribs,

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> by some little interlarded sneer. We get in these tricks of manner a taste of that essential vulgarity, that indifference to purity and distinction, which is latent but pervasive in all the products of this mind.[13]

It is well-known that Browning was a powerful influence on the young Pound, and I fear Ezra picked up quite a few tricks from him. There is a slap-dash method of composition, a looking-for a nod of approval, even an occasional guffaw, that is characteristic of both poets. Ezra did not grow up, however, in our climate of four-letter words, and I prefer his old American habit of wise-cracking to "that essential vulgarity" of a hearty pretentious Victorian. When Ezra is at his best he can touch a level of delicacy and sheer wonder of expression that Browning never realised in his work. But how rare the moments of splendour are!

LET ME NOW SUM UP my "replies to my critics" and the "second thoughts" on Ezra Pound. The main issue that stirred such a pother over my "memoir" revolved around the misgivings that Ezra vented on the shape of his *Cantos*. This concept of "structure" has been abused and over-worked in current discussion; and no doubt I am another victim of the same obsession. The moment we abandon a strict definition of structure as an isomorphic relation between an arrangement of ideas (words) and an external state of affairs (complex of facts), we run into vagueness and literary mumbo-jumbo.

But I must agree with Robert Conquest that the present anarchical Moabites who are infiltrating the temples and brothels of our "kulchur" are the genuine menace. It is they who are excreting all over the standards that a few independent critics are striving to uphold in both literary criticism and the transplanting of the classics into a modern speech.

The suggestion that I lack the "intellectual equipment" to appreciate the *Cantos* is not really for me to answer. But is it presupposed that only a small circle of dedicated and especially drilled "children of light" has the right and qualifications to clarify the mysteries of a baffling text? Or will the élite grant that we second-rate would-be poets and critics can skim over the surface of the *Cantos,* and that the general public is not barred from diving in and taking a few strokes before crying for help? (It might diminish the royalties from Ezra's big poem if it were only interpreted by an inner circle of Moabites.) I have also confessed that my years with Santayana, and long hours under Russell and Moore, may have violated an innocent naive realism. But we all have some kind of philosophy, latent or overt, and I feel that Ezra was closer to my brand (and Santayana's) when he wrote many years ago

> *Siftings on siftings in oblivion*
> *Till change hath broken down*
> *All things save beauty alone*

than when he claimed as a final insight that "it coheres all right." But I have worried this last line enough: it is time to leave "it" alone. I can't lift the big "ball of crystal" Ezra has brought us, and I am wary of the "great acorn of light." Yeats was better adapted to the kind of lifting and gazing required.

One final repetition. I prefer to see Ezra Pound plain, as a man and a poet. And I prophesy that the whitewashed Image of him that is being erected by an inner circle of devotees, and the din of the Poundian brass band that almost drowned Joyce's little magic flute, will fade out like the lights in a theatre. We will be left instead with a more solid and human Image, built in broad daylight, of one of the most original, talented and controversial figures in the world of "kulchur" of the twentieth century.

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[13] George Santayana, *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*, chap. VII, "The Poetry of Barbarism", pp. 208-209.

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LETTERS

Goldstücker's Double Standard

PROFESSOR EDUARD GOLDSTÜCKER'S attempts in his interview [ENCOUNTER, August] to eat his cake and have it, *i.e.* to criticise Communist practice freely without disassociating himself from the political tenets he has believed in since 1933, calls for a reply.

As some of his remarks have already been challenged by the questions put to him by his interviewers, I want to limit my remarks to the problem of the re-emergence of a Social Democratic Party in the Czechoslovakia of 1968. Nobody denies the good intentions of those actively connected with the "Prague Spring", but Professor Goldstücker's defence of their unwillingness to permit a Social Democratic alternative to the Communist Party shows their limitations. They could defend their case only by presenting a curious picture of former events. According to Professor Goldstücker, the Social Democrats in Czechoslovakia "ceased to exist as an independent party" in 1948. They did not, however, cease to exist of their own free will; their party was destroyed by forcing it into a so-called "merger" with the Communists. When Professor Goldstücker now calls this the "hard-won unity of the working class", he again starts off from the blatantly incorrect identification of the Communist Party with the working class. "We were ready to . . . cooperate with everyone," he says now. It is certainly correct that the Dubcek leadership showed *some* readiness in this direction, but only on its own terms, rejecting any possibility of a *real* cooperation based on compromise and mutual understanding with people who legitimately hold different views.

The Social Democrats emerged in May 1968 and simply declared that they would continue their activities which had been illegally suppressed in 1948. Though they had no office of their own and only a post-box as their address, within a few weeks they had 200,000 applications for membership and a nucleus of district and local organisations in nearly the whole country. In the uncertainty and continuously fluid situation at the time, the Dubcek Régime did not quite know how to react. In order not to alienate popular support, it did not dare to ban the cautious attempts of the Social Democrats to re-enter political life. But it never sanctioned their re-emergence. The Social Democrats themselves, in order not to complicate the situation, kept silent from the middle of July onwards when their reappearance as an independent force was one of the accusations levelled against the Dubcek Régime in the "Warsaw Letter."

When Goldstücker says that "there was no need to return to the multi-party system", he overlooks that *on paper* there was and still is a multi-party system in Czechoslovakia where the Communists tolerate the sham existence of some emasculated non-Communist parties. What was not permitted then and is, of course, not permitted today is the existence of a Social Democratic Party which could be a rallying point of all those who did not believe that "socialism with a human face" could ever be implemented by Communists, however well-meaning they might be personally. It is a poor explanation to say that one "could not have permitted free elections" because they "would have meant a struggle for power." Politics always mean a struggle for power.

While I fully appreciate that the reforms of 1968 were a brave effort under most difficult circumstances, one of those connected with them who has now lived in freedom for such a long time could be expected to have eventually realised that there is no halfway solution between communism of *any* shade and real freedom.

J. W. BRUEGEL

London

Bronowski & Science

I HAVE JUST read Dr Bronowski's article "Disestablishing Science" in the July issue of ENCOUNTER. You may be interested to learn that the system he is advocating (namely, to have a single national grant which is allocated by the scientific community itself) has been in existence in Switzerland for many years. All government grant money made available to Swiss scientists is given as a single grant to the Swiss National Fund and allocated by the National Research Council (of which I have now been a member for 7 years). The Council consists of about 30 scientists, most of them university professors, representing all disciplines from divinity to nuclear physics. The Council reviews the grant requests and is entirely free to distribute the funds among the different disciplines as it sees fit. The percentage distribution among the various disciplines has changed greatly over the years; but the decisions are the sole responsibility of the Research Council and the trustees of the Fund and the government is merely informed of the actions taken.

Although our country is small and the sums of money involved are accordingly unimportant in comparison to the expenditures of large countries, we do spend, on a per capita basis, just as much for research as the big Western powers. The system has worked to everybody's satisfaction for almost 20 years, and could serve as a model to other countries.

(Professor) HUBERT BLOCH

Basel

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Khrushchev Expertise

"IF YOU HAVEN'T got a case, attack the prosecuting attorney". This old and discredited maxim has been adopted by Mr Abraham Brumberg (*Letters*, September) as the sole means of defending an indefensible position. He answers practically none of the points I had raised: instead, he produces some personal innuendo concerning my political past. Anything Mr Brumberg has to say about my past is of no interest whatsoever: he knows as much about my personal history as about history in general, which is precious little indeed. His assertions and the attribution to me of a non-existent "ideological vocabulary" are but products of the same irresponsibility and disregard for fact so amply illustrated in his original article. However, I prefer to stick to the issues.

Mr Brumberg "cheerfully" accepts the charge that his hypothesis is "no more convincing" than the other theories about the Khrushchev "memoirs". Few people would share Mr Brumberg's generous opinion of his own conjectures. It is valid only in the sense in which one might say that the view that the moon was made of green cheese is no more convincing to the non-specialist than modern astronomical theories.

I say this not merely because Mr Brumberg's hypothesis is *per se* absurd, but mainly because, unlike any of the other Khrushchev-analysts, he did not even take the trouble to back it up with any semblance of evidence. To be fair, Mr Brumberg did provide one item of proof: the Khrushchev account of General Vlasov's career, he declared, "had been lifted out bodily from a biography published by his followers in Frankfurt in 1948!" I challenged him on this—and now Mr Brumberg explains that, although no such book ever existed, he has it all "on excellent, though regrettably not divulgeable, authority". Mr Brumberg thus joins the new Hochhuth School of Sealed-Lips Historians. (I assume he has already deposited his evidence with a Swiss bank.)

I shan't waste time on Mr Brumberg's reference to a private conversation he allegedly once had with me on the subject of Victor Louis (can he never abandon these uncivilised debating manners?). I have no recollection of it, but his memory may well be correct—the whole thing is nothing but a red herring, anyway, as I have never accused him of inconsistency on this.

Mr Brumberg makes no attempt to support his wild charge against me of "embellishing the truth". I am not entirely surprised, since he seems to have difficulty in distinguishing truth from untruth. Take the question of Mr Louis Heren's statement. In his original article Mr Brumberg flatly denied that the deputy editor of *The Times* had made any such statement. After I quoted chapter and verse he tries to wriggle out by making great play of my omission of the words "there is reason to believe". Mr Brumberg may not understand that this form of words meant, not "speculation" but precisely what it said: *The Times* was in possession of certain facts which led it to believe that the Khrushchev manuscript had been sold by the KGB, and it was printing the excerpts *in this belief*. Perhaps Mr Brumberg means that Mr Heren actually had no reason to believe any such thing—in that case, if he knows something that we don't, he should come out with it.

The most blatant instance of crude distortion comes when Mr Brumberg quotes *one part* of a sentence by Mr Heren, reflecting unfavourably on the KGB, and then indignantly exclaims: "This, to Mr Szamuely, was nothing less than an 'extraordinary paean of praise to the Soviet Secret Police' ". May I cite the full passage to which I referred, and of which only the first seven words were selected by Mr Brumberg: "Combining simple brutality with most tortuous subtlety, it [the KGB] nevertheless attracts into its ranks increasing numbers of highly intelligent and cultivated Russians. Paradoxically, they find in this privileged force a freedom, sometimes for good, denied to the great mass of their compatriots". Funnily enough, Mr Brumberg himself quoted these words in his original article and, like me, commented on their "peculiarity". What can one expect of a critic who, when it suits him, forgets even what he himself wrote?

Finally, I must explain that I do not share Mr Brumberg's obsession with cloak-and-dagger stuff: the KGB question occupied less than one-sixth of my 6000-word-long article in *The Spectator*. My main concern was to analyse the reliability of the Khrushchev "memoirs" as an historical source. But that, I imagine, falls well beyond the confines of Mr Brumberg's own interests.

TIBOR SZAMUELY

University of Reading

IF MR SZAMUELY is offended by my "personal innuendo", he has only himself to blame. I am afraid that his own "debating manners" make it difficult to be as "civilised" in one's reply as one would like to be.

When I criticised Mr Szamuely for "embellishing the truth" and "levelling extravagant accusations," I thought that a few telling examples of this tendency would suffice. Now, however, he accuses me of answering "practically none of the points [he] had raised"; and so I have no choice but to cite chapter and verse.

1. "Mr Brumberg . . . takes substantial liberties with the text of the reviewers he attacks, including my own" (*Letters*, August). The allegation about "other reviewers" is not supported by a single shred of evidence. As for his own text, I have already explained the item about Khrushchev's birthplace (*Letters*, September). Two other ostensible items remain:

(a) It was presumably "fallacious" of me to say that Mr Szamuely ascribed "the book's authorship to the KGB." Was it? In my article (May) I quite clearly used the words "wrote—or compiled—or 'edited' the book" interchange-

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ably. The title of Mr Szamuely's *Spectator* piece was "How the KGB Fooled the West," and surely one of its main points was to prove that *Khrushchev Remembers* was, in Mr Szamuely's words, "prepared by the KGB for its own purposes."

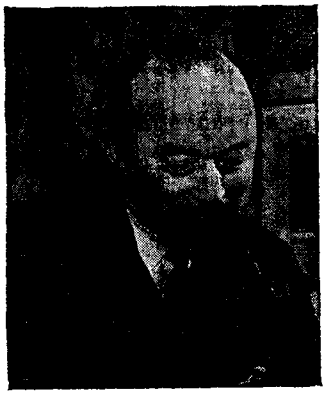
(b) The Heren articles ("the most blatant instance of crude distortion," no less). Is Mr Szamuely serious? If only "part of a sentence" reflects unfavourably on the KGB, then the sentence ceases to be an "extraordinary paean of praise to the Soviet secret police." Of course I had quoted the whole sentence in my article, and described Mr Heren's views as "peculiar." But there is a difference between a "peculiar statement" and a "paean of praise." Just as there is between saying that there is "reason to believe" that the manuscript came from the KGB, and courageously "admitting" that "the *Times* was publishing material sold by the KGB."

2. "Mr Brumberg repeatedly contradicts himself." As far as I can see, the only example of this malaise was my inability to "make up [my] mind about Victor Louis." But this is clearly absurd—*viz.* my article. At any rate, it now turns out that I was *not* inconsistent on this score. And so what remains of Mr Szamuely's horrendous accusation?

3. "According to Mr Brumberg," says Mr Szamuely, "poor old Khrushchev" suffered from certain "inhibitions" in committing his thoughts to paper (or tape). I said nothing of the sort. I merely allowed that it would have been natural for Khrushchev not to discuss "the policies of his successors . . . even within the privacy of his exile dacha."

4. "What a pity," says Mr Szamuely expansively, "that in [my] long review [I] could find no space to mention just a few . . . passages" that (as I had noted) "should cause no end of embarrassment to the men in the Kremlin." To this bold challenge I can only reply that if the Kremlin leadership does *not* find it embarrassing to be described, by one of their own erstwhile comrades, as accomplices of a bloody tyrant who had sent thousands of innocent people to death; as having shared power with a veritable rogue's gallery (Beria, who had raped "more than a hundred girls and women"; Kaganovitch, "unsurpassed in his viciousness," Malenkov, who "helped to promote people from the ranks only to have them eliminated later," Shcherbakov, "a poisonous snake"—etc., etc.); of being criticised for, *inter alia*, its "closed borders" policy and "military overspending"—all of which, and more, as Mr Szamuely is surely aware, is to be found in *Khrushchev Remembers*—then the Soviet leaders are even more thick-skinned than I have always believed them to be.

I could go on—but to what avail? Clearly Mr Szamuely chose to ignore both the substance and the overall tone of my article (nearly a third of



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which, incidentally, *was* devoted to the "reliability of the Khrushchev 'memoirs' as an historical source"). Of all the people mentioned in my article, he alone saw my disagreements as "attacks," couched his response in abusive terms and then, astonished at my reaction, infused more heat into the debate by hurling new charges against—and gratuitous personal remarks about—me. I must say I regret having succumbed to Mr Szamuely's insistence on making this discussion so desperately humourless.

ABRAHAM BRUMBERG

London

Three against Europe

YOUR series on Britain and the EEC ("Going into Europe", ENCOUNTER, June, July, August) is exciting quite a lot of interest over here. Only yesterday at the University here, I heard a distinguished social scientist, counter-cyclical as such intellectuals tend to be, make the remark that if Harry Johnson (of Chicago), and Joan Robinson (of Cambridge), and Edward J. Mishan (of the L.S.E.), *all* felt the same way—namely, negatively—about "going into Europe," then there must indeed be something to it after all!

G. H. HARROW

Chicago

Paradise Now

MAY I OFFER a footnote to Mr John Passmore's perceptive and illuminating "Paradise Now"? [ENCOUNTER, November]. It seems to me that where the drug mystic is content with paradise now, the classical mystic really has his eye on "now and then." His experience is not isolated but part of a continuous context. It requires strenuous deliberate moral preparation and is not considered authentic unless it leads to greater spiritual effectiveness. Its detachment is critical; judgment is brought to bear on what follows. Although sought as an end in itself it is used as a means to what lies beyond and this further purpose is always present even when not specifically attended to.

So Teresa could claim that love of God was genuine only when it increased love for neighbour, and Jonathan Edwards could insist that he knew he was visited by God and not a demon only if he was made a more moral man. Al Ghazzali found authenticity in the fact that his experience forced him to abandon the self-centred motive in his scholarship and teaching. But the experience was always of an intrinsic as well as an instrumental value—this seems to be why the literature abounds in paradoxes. As Lao put it: "some make themselves lowly for the sake of conquering: others are lowly and therefore conquer."

The point to notice is that where drug mysticism means surrender to processes of the body, classical mysticism meant surrender to values consciously chosen, which is, of course, surrender of a completely different sort. As the late Charles A. Bennett used to say, the classical mystic was wrestling not with a disease but with a problem, composing his mind not to take a snooze but to take aim; and he achieved not oblivion but the recovery of the forgotten subject of his predicates.

J. S. BIXLER

Jaffrey, New Hampshire

A Welsh Poet

PLEASE, when you print a beautiful essay like that by Ned Thomas, "On a Welsh Poet", [ENCOUNTER, June], take pity on your readers.

After reading about D. Gwenallt Jones we wanted to rush out and buy his books of poetry and his one novel, and everything else that Gwenallt wrote.

Thomas was no help. He gave only the names of the novel and one symposium. Nowhere did he mention a publisher of Gwenallt's work. Nor could we find in the advertisements anything about Gwenallt.

Continue to uncover, as you did for this reader, the existence of hitherto unknown treasures. Be sure, however, to help a person explore the treasures by himself.

Now, please, from whom can we buy Gwenallt?

RACHMIEL FORSCHMIEDT

Seattle

GWENALLT'S volumes of poetry—*Ysgubau'r Awen, Eples, Gwreiddiau*, and the posthumously published *Y Coed*, as well as his only novel, *Plasau'r Brenin* (recently reprinted), are published by Gwasg Gomer, Llandysul, Cardiganshire, Wales. My essay was an extended version of a chapter in my book *The Welsh Extremist: A Culture in Crisis* (Gollancz), which is an interpretative effort directed to non-Welsh readers. A very few of Gwenallt's poems have been translated into English, and these are not collected, but some can be found in Anthony Conran's *Penguin Book of Welsh Verse in Translation.*

NED THOMAS

Tregaron,
Cardiganshire

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London

PIG LANE: *A proposal to change the name of Pig Lane, site of a £44,000 police station being built for the Mid-Anglia force at St Ives, Hunts., is to be the subject of a court battle.*

The chief constable feels that "Pig"—"a word constantly used these days by Left-wing militants to describe police officers"—will bring the local police into disrepute, and the borough council wants to re-name the lane Eastfield Road.

But Mr John Dawson, who has lived in the lane for 12 years, has filed a complaint with magistrates under the 1925 Public Health Act, claiming that the name change is unpopular and against the interests of the town.

He says in his complaint that the change would involve him in trouble and loss and that the new name is "artificial or synthetic" and bears "no relation to the locality or the historical or early associations of the district."

"I feel the police are misguided in this. I have documents describing Pig Lane as far back as 1792. It is a part of our history. I see no reason for the change."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

The magistrate at Old Street, London, stopped a case yesterday after deciding that a four-letter word is no longer obscene. James Patrick Lawson, aged 43, motor fitter, denied a charge, brought under the 132-year-old Metropolitan Police Act, of using obscene language when Police Constable Andrew Richardson attempted to search his van.

After the officer's evidence, Mr McLean said: "Is this really obscene in 1971? It is an adjective used by some people who know no other." He dismissed the charge against Mr Lawson, of Queen's Road, Walthamstow, London, and a further charge alleging he used insulting words was not proceeded with.

THE TIMES

Washington

BASIC ENGLISH: *A House subcommittee assailed the Coast Guard and the State Department yesterday, accusing them of ineptitude when they frustrated the attempted defection of a Lithuanian sailor last Nov. 23. Decrying an indifferent, "casual' approach to the defection, the House unit said: "If this attitude is typical of high officials in the Coast Guard, God help America."*

The condemnation was contained in a report about the return of Seaman Simas Kudirka to a Soviet fishing vessel off Martha's Vineyard after he had jumped on to the Coast Guard cutter Vigilant and asked for asylum. It called the return of the defector a "flagrant disregard of the long-established American principle of asylum." and said that "oral and written communications that might have clarified the situation lacked precision or completeness. Even the communications equipment proved unreliable.

"As a nation we have pride and confidence in the reliability of our sophisticated communications equipment. If Nov. 23 is a demonstration of efficiency, we had better think of smoke signals or carrier pigeons."

The subcommittee concluded: "A reading of the many communications on the Kudirka case points up the need not only for aggressive action but for a refresher course in basic English for both Coast Guard and State Department officers."

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

London

IT'S DOUBTFUL *whether anything as big and silly as the Eurovision Song Contest has ever been seen in the history of the world (it even went to America this year, quaintly enough on the National Educational Television network); in the end the sheer size of the silliness, and the effort to pump it up even bigger, becomes rather appealing.*

It was delightful [Peter Black writes] to see so many of the BBC's bigwigs in the front seats, applauding and beaming as though they were assisting at the première of a recently discovered Mozart opera. It was enchanting to hear the British commentator, using a vocabulary more peculiar than extensive ("Well, that's an incredible spectacle," he exclaimed, referring to the announcement of the result), describing Britain's venture in terms that would have done nicely for our first manned trip into space.

Still, in its own daft way it is a cheerful contest, like Miss World and Jeux Sans Frontières. Twenty years ago, how many of us would have been so hopeful to predict that in 1971 the tribes of Europe would spend such a harmless Saturday night in?

DAILY MAIL

London

The B.S. in the new film title, "B.S. I Love You" stands for bullshit, a word that seems to rhyme with moon and June in current American romantic comedies. Here it is spoken at meaningful moments presumably to illustrate the liberation of youth, also demonstrated by sex acts in an airliner's lavatory and in a crowded bar.

Once upon a time, bullshit was a meaningful word. It was used by the Armed Forces to describe anything that was pretentious and unnecessary, so admirably describing this little movie. B.S. to 20th Century Fox.

EVENING STANDARD

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Why Pan Am's hard core keep coming back.

Pan Am has been flying and pioneering for over 40 years. Already we've carried over two-and-a-half million 747 passengers.

A lot of them are businessmen who keep coming back.

So here's how we cater for them all. First, we use our worldwide PANAMAC booking system which comes into action the moment your secretary phones a Pan Am Travel Agent.

Then:

The Seasoned Flyer

He's flown the Atlantic so many times he's lost count. He prefers Pan Am because our 747 staff know that some passengers want to be left alone to sleep or work. O.K., the world's most experienced airline knows when it's not wanted!

We time our flights with businessmen in mind. And over 50 Pan Am offices in the States make it easy to rearrange schedules and routes. We don't have the world's largest privately owned Telex system for nothing!

The Occasional Flyer

He may have homework to do or he may just want to *relax* for six or seven hours. Maybe he's ready for his meals followed by a choice of two movies, 8 channels of entertainment, and a wonderful programme of 'Music-to-sleep-by.'* Pan Am flies daily to and from no fewer than 16 American cities, too – and *that's* convenient for any businessman.

Newcomer to Transatlantic flying?

With Pan Am, you're flying in the world's most experienced 747s. And you're in America the moment you step aboard. *We've also started serving the food of the country you're going to.* So if you're off to America you may get anything from Oysters Rockefeller to Creole Jambalaya in First Class. Country Chicken in Cream Sauce to Key Lime Pie in Economy.

For everyone

There's a 'No Smoking' section, and headroom and leg room and plenty of space to wander about in. If you're flying First Class, there's a bar and salon upstairs, a separate movie screen, extra space and no through traffic.

No need to worry about your luggage either, because Pan Am luggage rides in special protective containers, standing handles up, to guard against damage.

So regular, occasional or newcomer – just call your Pan Am Travel Agent or Pan Am, 193 Piccadilly, London W1V 0AD. Tel: 01-734 7292.

Birmingham: 021-236 8731
Manchester: 061-832 3981
Glasgow: 041-248 5744

*All this entertainment for £1·05.

Pan Am

The world's most experienced airline.

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